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Intellectuals and Just Causes

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Robert Ardrey Dannie Abse Constantine FitzGibbon
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Edna O'Brien Nirad C Chaudhuri John Mander
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A Symposium

Colin MacInnes
Old youth and young

Nigel Dennis
An Italian poet

James Stern
Malcolm Lowry

Francis-Williams
Libel law and the press

Peter Black
Money Rubbish and TV hopes

Colin Welch
A day in Berlin

Stanley Henig, M.P.
Great Expectations

Nirad C Chaudhuri
A letter from India

edited by
Melvin J Lasky
&
Nigel Dennis

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Encounter

SEPTEMBER 1967
VOL. XXIX NO. 3

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* NIGEL DENNIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: *John Mander, Anthony Hartley, Goronwy Rees, John Weightman.*
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Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1. Per copy: UK 5s.: USA & Canada $1: India Rs. 2.35. Back numbers: 6s. ($1). Annual sub.: UK 57s. 6d.: USA & Canada $10 (by air $11.50): India Rs. 28: Elsewhere 60s. Trade/Subscriptions: The Continental Publishers & Distributors Ltd. 25 Worship Street London EC2 (NAT. 0854). US & Canadian subscriptions: British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street New York, N.Y. 10022. US newsstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. 485 Fifth Avenue New York 10017 (MU 7–2645). Authorised as second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for the payment of postage in cash. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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Intellectuals & Just Causes

THE RECENT WAR *in the Middle East between Arabs and Israelis has raised, as did the Viet Nam war, the recurrent issue of intellectuals "taking a stand." New appeals for support and solidarity were circulated among writers, scholars, and artists. Letters to editors were published which clarified one's own, or condemned someone else's, political (or "emotional") position. Where was justice (or is this a foolish and irrelevant question in world politics)? What humane or cultural values were at issue? How was world order, or the cause of peace or liberty, involved? What* should *an intellectual think, say, and do?*

In a recent comment on an inquiry comparing the views of the Western intelligentsia between 1937 (Spain) and 1967 (Viet Nam), W. H. Auden remarked:

> *"Why writers should be canvassed for their opinion on controversial political issues I cannot imagine. Their views have no more authority than those of any reasonably well-educated citizen. Indeed, when read in bulk, the statements made by writers, including the greatest, would seem to indicate that literary talent and political common sense are rarely found together...."*

Yet from Erasmus to Zola, and from Milton's "good old cause" to the "moral crusades" or "dirty little wars" of modern times, writers of all tendencies and temperaments have confronted (or, often, been forced to confront) the question of where they stood: and could they do otherwise?

We publish in the following pages—as we did earlier, in the "Going Into Europe" symposium [December 1962—March 1963]*—a series of replies by a cross-section of intellectuals to the questions raised by these preliminary general remarks. (Biographical notes on the contributors will be found on p. 96.) How, if at all, has the Israeli-Arab conflict affected your attitude towards war, to great-power commitments, to supporting or opposing just or unjust causes? How have intellectuals—and how should they have—reacted?*

—*A Symposium*

John Osborne:

THE LAST TIME I involved myself in any political demonstration was in 1961, when, with a great many other writers or hang-around writers, I "sat down" in Trafalgar Square. I fully expected to go to gaol but mercifully didn't, although I was looking forward at the time to a legitimate reason for not being able to write. In fact, I was lovingly carried off into a van by eight—I think—kindly constables who called me "sir." (All those I saw manhandled asked for what they got. And they wanted it.) Apart from being reviled and libelled by the *Sunday Express*, I was fined forty shillings and went home for a good soak in the bath with a severe headache. I don't regret having done this. At the time it had a kind of national poetic logic that certain of us should make this particular gesture. My sense of timing rarely lets me down and I know I was right at the time. However, I resolved then that I should never engage in this kind of concerted affair again unless some unforeseeable situation should arise. It revealed itself to my simple spirit that there is a certain kind of militant animal which seeks out and exploits political crises for reasons of personal aggrandisement and creative frustration. There is an odour of psychopathic self-righteousness about many of the hardy annual protesters which I find ludicrous and distasteful. I have long ago refused to sign those glib and predictable letters to the *Times*, including the one during the recent Israeli crisis when so many of

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these cause-happy activists leapt to the telephone and their pens.

The same principle applies to the Viet Nam War, the very name of which has become a synonym for left-wing sanctimony. I have not been able to come to a clear resolution over this or many other political dilemmas. I do know that I see little to choose between Communist police terrorism and shoddy American power politics. Except that I find the latter minimally less repugnant. We really do live in a very wicked world. I believe that writers should express their position about this as well as they can and in the country in which they have elected to live. Writers are often more thoughtful than the rest of the community and occasionally more literate. However, they should speak modestly as gifted or admired individuals and not as part of a privileged pressure group with access to revealed truths. The presumption and sentimentality of many of my fellow craftsmen is frequently appalling. May God gag all actresses forever. Unless they are divine and the ones who are just shut up. Consequently I sign letters no longer, friends who were never friends call me blimp. To hell with them. It is harder than they will ever know. I certainly don't give money. Not to subsidise ungifted people who organise these junkets. Better even to spend it on a subscription to ENCOUNTER. No, not for all those school teachers and pedants and readers of the *Guardian* and the *Observer*. Perhaps to *Horse and Hound* and a girl to read it with.

Herbert Read:

FOR A PACIFIST who rejects all forms of violence, certain logical consequences follow in relation to a particular case of violence such as the Israeli-Arab conflict. The Israelis' surprise attack must be condemned. Equally the Arab threat to use violence against Israel that preceded this attack must be condemned. But the pacifist will reserve his strongest condemnation for those nations, including France, Russia and Great Britain, who have armed and abetted both hostile groups.

The pacifist is dismissed as an idealist, but he can always retort that his policy of non-violence has never been tried out (except by Gandhi in India, where it was successful, but admittedly in a situation that is not comparable). How often must it be shown that the alternative policy of aggression solves nothing? After fifty years of war the world is more divided than ever, feelings of aggression are stronger than ever, the future darker than ever.

The pacifist claims that his policy is sane and realistic, but it is neither sane nor realistic to ask the pacifist to resolve a situation that would never have arisen if his policy had been followed in the past. In my opinion it was an act of political folly to create "a national home for the Jewish people" in the midst of the Arab world, but the Balfour declaration did at least contemplate that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." At the time of the Balfour declaration there were about 535,000 Moslems and about 85,000 Jews in Palestine. There are now more than two million Jews and less than 500,000 Moslems. Such a reversal of population and all it implies of relative power and privilege is eloquent enough; the national "home" has become a national "state" and the Arab (in his own opinion) a dispossessed minority.

If we are to speak of "just causes," then the Arabs who have been in effective possession of Palestine for many centuries have justice on their side. A people that settles in a particular region is assimilated within a generation or two. If we are to go back for a thousand years or more to establish "rights," then the Gaelic people of Ireland and Wales have a right to reclaim those parts of the British Isles from which they were driven by the Romans and Anglo-Saxons. The creation of a modern Jewish state in Israel was an attempt to reverse not merely history, but also all those evolutionary processes that determine the social structure of human communities.

What alternative solution was there (or is there) for the Jewish problem? If a desert territory could have been found in some part of the world (or created by the voluntary transfer of populations) that might have been a viable solution, but it would not have satisfied Zionist idealism. The consuming desire of the Jews has always been to reverse the Dispersion, to return to the Promised Land, and I think anyone with imagination must sympathise with such a romantic ideal. But unfortunately romanticism in the sphere of politics becomes nationalism (not racialism, for the Jews do not claim to be a "race" in the sense that the Nazis claimed to be Aryans, or even in the sense of Negro "racialism"). Nationalism has been the curse of the modern world, as many political writers have demonstrated. Nationalism is now stronger than any other political sentiment—stronger than socialism or communism, stronger than any world religion, a form of mass hysteria which must have deep foundations in the collective unconscious (induced, as Marx was the first to point out, by the economic and psychological process which he called alienation).

To get rid of such a deep-seated paranoia is a

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task beyond the powers of politicians, who are themselves unconscious victims of the frenzy. It is a problem for intellectuals, for philosophers, poets, writers of every kind, and above all a problem of education. For that reason I cannot agree with W. H. Auden about the right of intellectuals to intervene in political issues. But persuasion and education are terribly slow processes, it will be said, and meanwhile the world is in flames. In such a situation we must adopt more immediate, more practical measures, and so we are in my opinion driven to the only immediate and practical form of action, which is non-violent resistance to all forms of aggression. But non-violent resistance is not (as its name would seem to imply) a negative policy; it has immediate counterparts in mutual aid. If mutual aid, instead of mutual hatred, had been practised in Palestine there would have been no Israeli-Arab problem. If all the money that was spent in arming the Jews and Arabs could have been spent on the development of integrated schools and co-operatives in Palestine, a Commonwealth might now exist where there is only mutual hostility.

Martin Buber, who spent his last years in Jerusalem, believed that Jew and Arab could be taught to live together as a "community of Communities." Buber was a great and wise philosopher, but his was a voice lost in the wilderness that separates Arab and Jew. In receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade at Frankfurt in 1953 he pointed out that "the great peace" is something essentially different from the absence of war. "Hearkening to the human voice," he said, "where it speaks forth unfalsified, this above all is needed today. The busy voice of the hour must no longer drown out the *vox humana*, the essence of the human which has become a voice. This voice must not only be listened to, it must be answered and led out of the lonely monologue of the peoples. Peoples must engage in talk with one another through their truly human men if the great peace is to appear and the devastated life of the earth renew itself."

Will Israel, in its hour of triumph, now listen to the human voice of its greatest modern prophet? If Israel were to listen to this voice, and refrain from further violence, the Arab too might listen, and then the dialogue of peace might begin. There is no other way.

Dannie Abse:

LIKE MOST WRITERS, from time to time, I am asked to sign a petition, join a march, contribute to a symposium. I know that these expressions of protest have little value, and when I reluctantly agree to accept an invitation of this kind I feel curiously immodest. On the other hand, just keeping silent over this or that political issue, just opting out, just closing one's dignified eyes in a hopeless gesture of lassitude does no good either. Besides, perhaps such resignations diminish one.

Recently, I have felt strongly about the Middle East situation. Not least, because in 1966 I had visited Israel for the first time, and had begun to understand some of the Israeli attitudes that dominate or, at least, colour many of their responses. As a boy in Wales I had been used to the school register being called out every day: Davies, Evans, Jones, Morgan, Williams. In Israel I found that the roll call was answered rather differently: "I am Auschwitz, I am Belsen, I am Dachau...." Recognising concretely, not abstractly, the fact that a large section of Israelis are death-camp survivors (or the children of survivors) it became more difficult to shrug off the inflammatory threats of Arab statesmen, Arab newspapers, and Arab radio. One remembered with a touchier gravity the long succession of bloody propaganda artifacts the Israelis have had to endure over the years. Thus the headline in *Al-Bilad* in 1960: THE ARREST OF EICHMANN WHO HAD THE HONOUR OF KILLING FIVE MILLION JEWS, or the cartoon in the Lebanese newspaper, *Al-Nahar*, which published a cartoon of Eichmann standing on a heap of skulls, the caption of which read: EICHMANN IS BEING TRIED FOR HIS MISTAKES. HE DIDN'T KILL THEM ALL. These and many other later Arab statements threatening annihilation —on the eve of the war, Shukeiry, at King Hussein's side in Amman, said: "If the Arabs took Israel the surviving Jews would be helped to return to their native countries. But my estimation is that none will survive"—had been underlined by numerous border raids, some occurring when I was in Israel, in which this young man or that young woman had been disembowelled by a Syrian "patriot." As far as I was concerned, then, when it came to actual war I felt emotionally and intellectually committed.

So I was saddened and perhaps naively surprised by the reaction of *some* of my friends to the Israeli predicament. Politically romantic and sentimental attitudes towards Nasser's totalitarian "Socialist" Egypt had made them argue, to say the least, ambiguously. Those with more deeply entrenched Marxist sympathies had reacted in a stereotyped manner and one was reminded again of Nietzsche's dictum: "Convictions are prisons."

Yet the problem remains: what can a sceptically committed and lazy individual, such as myself, do besides argue with friends, write

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letters to the Press, sign petitions, contribute to symposia? "Under the shadow of a war, what can I do that matters?" is a question that Stephen Spender asked 30 odd years ago, and is one that surely must still nag the conscience of any humanist who may feel that politics is too serious a business to leave entirely to politicians. The recent events in the Middle East, coupled with what is going on in Viet Nam and elsewhere, requires individuals, I think, to become more *informed* about particular political issues than most at present are, and to make some gesture of articulation however apparently futile.

Colin Wilson:

AUDEN'S comments on writers and politics surely miss the point. The reason a writer gets asked his opinion is that he is supposed to reach a wide audience and (unlike a film star or pop singer) to be capable of influencing them intelligently. And I daresay writers have about as much political common sense as grocers, perhaps more. No, the problem lies elsewhere. There is every reason why a writer should take sides on a matter like the Common Market or the nationalisation of steel. These are, so to speak, peaceful issues. Even the question of communism is a relatively peaceful issue. But even here, the danger arises—I mean the danger of dressing up subjective little emotions—concerns for one's own skin—to look as if they were cool and objective judgments. I still recall with embarrassment those anti-Russian outbursts of John Wain in the *Observer* in 1961, after he had been a guest of the Russians. I could see there was genuine concern for "intellectual freedom" there; but there was also a lot of the wrong sort of identification: "My god, what would they do with me if I was a Russian writer. . . . Oh, poor old me, how ghastly!"—and the shriek of intellectual protest is made shriller with outraged egoism.

In the case of a war, how can a writer's views possibly be anything but disguised egoism? Three years ago, I was asked by the Arab Ministry of Culture to do a tour of D.P. camps with M. Sartre. I declined because travel bores me. If I had gone, I would undoubtedly have many personal reasons for defending the Arab side of the quarrel—Arabs are delightful hosts—but that would be neither here nor there.

I am only trying to point out that any views I might express are worthless unless I try to exclude *all* personal feeling, and make the attempt to be coldly scientific. The fact that I am a writer of ideas, and that most of my books are translated into Arabic, should be as irrelevant as the fact that I have a lot of Jewish friends who have been madly rushing around drumming up support for the Israeli cause.

Good. So let us try to be really objective, and see how depressing it is. In *The Territorial Imperative*, Robert Ardrey points out that the Arabs are really the strongest supporters of Israel, by taking up such a hostile attitude. Territory is defined by its limits and by its enemies. Israel is an extremely poor country, in which luxuries are almost taxed out of existence. Life is extremely hard. There would be plenty of reason for demoralisation and discouragement, if it were not for the "ring of aggression" that has changed the Jewish national character. (Ardrey quotes the joke of the American Jew looking around at the brawny specimens of manhod in Tel Aviv and saying "It's all very nice, but where are the Jews?"). Many people may have been startled by the easy victory of the Israelis, but Ardrey certainly wasn't; and neither, having read Ardrey, was I. If the Arabs really wanted to destroy Israel, they should do away with all borders and overwhelm them with hospitality.

Perhaps I might at least be expected to make pious anti-war noises? Well, of course I'm anti-war in the obvious sense. Having a wife and family, I don't like the thought of what happens to civilians when the soldiers start shooting at one another. But again, if I am completely objective, I am forced to modify this attitude. I have pointed out before that in all animal groups there is a "dominant 5%" which needs to *express* its dominance if it is to be happy. A hundred years ago, there was plenty for these dominant people to do by way of exploring, climbing mountains, improving society and so on. And the young man from the slums could obey John Soule's injunction to "go west and grow with the country." Nowadays, he can only express his dominance by sharpening his flick-knife and looking for trouble. The steady rise in the crime rate, suicide rate and rate of insanity and neurosis is a direct reflection of the frustration of this 5%.

Oddly enough, the suicide rate almost vanishes during wars, and the crime rate and insanity rate drops enormously. Presumably the criminal members of the 5% no longer feel becalmed in an over-civilised world without adventure. It is frightening to think of what would happen at the moment if some form of world government achieved the total suppression of all conflicts, and China, America and Russia signed mutual aid pacts. The crime rate would probably multiply by ten within months.

I am certainly not defending or supporting war. I am only pointing out that, from a purely

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objective standpoint, the present situation is not as bad as it looks: continued international tension, minor outbreaks of war that scare everybody—this acts as a psychological safety-valve that prevents worse things happening to our society. There are, of course, alternatives. We might give the same attention to the problem of the 5% that we at present give to the problem of overpopulation. For it probably *could* be solved, and the need for the safety-valve would vanish. In the meantime, it would be nice if we could do a little clear thinking, and a little less emotionalising, about these issues.

Constantine FitzGibbon:

IT WAS BYRON who wrote: "My country, right or wrong!" He then proceeded to express a glowing admiration for Napoleon and a bitter contempt for Castlereagh, to emigrate to Italy, and to die in a war that was of minimal political concern to his country. A measure of confusion is revealed. A century and more later many British intellectuals were dedicated to the proposition that their society was utterly rotten and should be destroyed with all possible speed in the interests of the system that prevailed in Soviet Russia. Yet in 1939–41, when Russia was allied to Nazi Germany, many of these men volunteered to fight for Britain and, at one remove, against Russia. Again a measure of confusion. And this is hardly surprising since patriotism and anti-patriotism alike are emotional, not intellectual, phenomena. When one's own country is directly involved the intellectual is at a discount.

This may account for the fact that the maximum intellectual heat is turned on when the war is far away or at least does not involve the death in action of one's compatriots. (Volunteers don't count.) Compare the reaction of the intellectuals to Korea and to Viet Nam to the Spanish Civil War and the civil war in the Indian subcontinent: to apartheid in South Africa and to Black-and-Tans in Ireland. The explanation is obvious. If the struggle is sufficiently remote it can be viewed as an intellectual exercise and a moral problem. Stern judgments can then be handed down, and safely. In fact it would seem that for the run-of-the-mill intellectual, the less he knows about a complex issue far away the stronger his moral judgments. And this in turn would account for the fact that that same intellectual, whether he be English, American or French, would appear to be just about the stupidest political animal about. Perhaps that is why the public in the only durable democracies—Britain and the U.S.—have preserved a healthy distrust of "intellectual" politicians. Or perhaps it is the reverse, and that this is why those democracies have endured.

This, of course, does not mean that writers, dons and so on in a democracy should be silent on politico-moral issues. It merely means that their views, though published, are really of no more interest than the unpublished views of bank managers and businessmen, and perhaps less since the latter are more likely to have some practical concern in the issues involved. Nor does it mean that there are no moral issues. But one did not need to win the Nobel Prize or be a Senior Wrangler in order to take the measure of a Hitler, a Stalin or a Nasser. But there I go . . . I really know nothing about Egypt whatever but am absolutely certain that the Israelis were absolutely right to beat the absolute daylights out of them.

David Daiches:

WHEN THE Arab-Israeli war seemed on the point of breaking out it looked as though Israel might well be annihilated and her inhabitants destroyed. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, it seemed to me, as I should imagine to most people in this country, that such an outcome would be unimaginably horrible. I therefore agreed to sign a joint letter to the *Sunday Times* to that effect.

On the eve of the war I found Arab propaganda vicious in the extreme and I was intensely irritated by it. And I was glad when Israel won so decisively and in so short a time.

Having said this, I must go on to make some important points that tend the other way. Coming as I do of an old rabbinical family (my paternal ancestry goes directly back to Judah ha-Nasi), and having been brought up in a strongly Zionist atmosphere, I recognise my emotional predisposition in favour of the Israeli cause. But I recognise, too, the special responsibility of intellectuals of Jewish background to counteract the naïve messianism of orthodox Jewish spokesmen and to try to understand the history and the meaning of the implacable Arab hostility to Israel. However much the Arabs may have exaggerated and lied, however much they may have disseminated crude and nasty anti-Jewish propaganda, the Arabs have a case. While it is untrue that Zionists who settled in Palestine after the Balfour Declaration forcibly acquired Arab property, and while it is true that only the united Arab attack on the newborn state of Israel led to Arab dispossession, the

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fact remains that Zionists from the beginning either ignored or grossly underestimated the inevitable prejudice to the existing Arab inhabitants that would result from the establishment of a Jewish National Home as called for by the Balfour Declaration; they ignored, too, the clear fact that the assurance in the Declaration that this should not be so involved a contradiction. The Arabs had a legitimate grievance throughout the 1920s and 1930s, a grievance which Zionists have always denied. That grievance was certainly fanned by others for political purposes and it sometimes expressed itself in crude violence; but it was real and, in spite of all the Arabs have said and done, it is still real.

Israel's victory gives the Israeli government a magnificent opportunity to show that Israel is not like any other little nationalist state, an opportunity to behave with unprecedented magnanimity and generosity, and by so doing both to promote a settlement of this old and bitter dispute and to give some substance to the claim that the Jews still have a moral lesson to deliver to mankind. They should publicly announce that, while they cannot accept as true the distortions of Arab propaganda, they concede that Arabs *have* suffered injustice at Jewish hands and that in the past Jews have been too hesitant to admit this. They should admit that the problem of the Arab refugees is a real one, which Israel must take the initiative in solving. They should state that they see themselves as a Middle Eastern country which must discover a way of living in amity with its Arab nighbours and make a strong plea for Israel-Arab co-operation in technical works to improve the standard of living in Arab countries. They must, whatever Arab provocation, hail the Arabs as brothers and insist on this in spite of the inevitable initial repulse. After all, Israel cannot live for ever as a tiny country surrounded by a vast hostile population. And only generosity, patience, a willingness not to bear malice, and a supreme act of the moral imagination (the Hebrew prophets knew about that) can improve matters. The Prime Minister of Israel should assert his willingness to go to Cairo or anywhere else and to talk to his fellow political leaders among the Arabs. (He cannot expect Nasser to go to Canossa in an act of conspicuous self-abasement.) Such action will not immediately bear fruit, and it will not be easy to maintain this stance in face of the inevitable initial rejection. But it seems to me to be the only way. "Let us work together for the benefit of *our* Middle East" is the common language of Israelis and Arabs that Israel should now work for. There are times when imaginative humanity may prove to be the most hard-headed and realistic politics.

Hans J. Morgenthau:

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that ENCOUNTER should raise at all the question as to what an intellectual ought to think, say, and do with regard to a current issue of foreign policy, such as the Middle East and Viet Nam. That question implies a doubt about the legitimacy and relevance of the intellectual's involvement in public affairs. In the United States, that doubt is currently being transformed into an outright attack upon the competence of outstanding individual intellectuals and upon the role which the intellectuals as a group perform in the discussion of public issues. The immediate occasion is of course the opposition of large groups of intellectuals to the American involvement in Viet Nam.

It is obviously true that intellectuals *per se* have no specific competence to deal with any public issue. When Voltaire took up the cause of Calas he did not act as an expert in criminal justice; nor did Zola when he came to the rescue of Dreyfus. George Bernard Shaw had nothing to contribute to colonial administration when he cried out against the execution of some Egyptians by the British authorities; nor did Jeremy Bentham when he warned against the colonial policies of Great Britain. The French intellectuals who opposed the Algerian war had no political or military expertise to bring to bear on the issue; nor do the American intellectuals who oppose the American involvement in Viet Nam.

What intellectuals can and must contribute to the discussion of public issues is not technical competence but a peculiar and unique position within the public realm. They are the only social group that is not committed to a particular interest or position. Intellectuals have a commitment only to the truth as they see it. They may be mistaken, or they may even be corrupted by offering an ideological defence for a particular interest or position under the guise of professing the truth. What they have to say in the short run may be irrelevant to the issues at hand. The intellectual support of Israel and the intellectual opposition to the American involvement in Viet Nam do not influence policy; for while Israel has our sympathies, the Arabs have the oil, the geographic location, and the numbers; and while the irrationality of American policy in Viet Nam is obvious, the government of the United States has too high a personal stake in the perpetuation of error to be susceptible to rational argument.

Still, the intellectual has a vital function to perform, a function that is both moral and practical. By confronting the powers-that-be with the truth, they erect a standard by which the

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actions of the government can be judged. They speak, in the Biblical phrase, truth to power. By doing this, they engage in a dialogue which establishes the intellectual respectability and, hence, the practical possibility of alternative policies. Thus the intellectual, by providing an independent standard of evaluation, also provides the possibility for political change.

It is for this reason that the powers-that-be are concerned with the intellectual as a threat to the status quo. They listen to the "voice in the wilderness" and try to still it; they read the handwriting on the wall and wish they could erase it. In spite of his exposure to error and his political impotence in the short run, they pay the intellectual the compliment of hating him, persecuting him, trying to silence him—and finally heeding him.

I once asked Helen Susman what the political effects of her lonely opposition to the policies of the government of South Africa were. She answered, none. But, she added, there must be somebody to uphold a moral principle. This is indeed the mission of the intellectual. It is frustrating in the short run. But it is also an essential ingredient of the moral and political health of the public realm.

Edna O'Brien:

I RECALL that around 1847 there was a potato famine in Ireland, wars across Europe, and during those selfsame days and nights Emily Brontë was imprisoned—and profitably—in her private passion, and Mayhew was observing the comedy of cows and nursemaids in Hyde Park. To say that one must or must not engage in politics is pointless, categorical, and smug. It also ignores the fact that our major actions are often unguessed until we actually execute them. Otherwise murder, martyrdom and sublime sacrifice would be even more incomprehensible, yet history has taught us that there is an uncommon proportion of all three.

Behaviour has an element of self-interest. Beneath the crust of our apparent commitment or indifference lies so much else. When the war broke out in the Middle East, I was unquestionably on the side of Israel. I realise that my motives were many—racial, political, religious, the buried matter of lineage and folklore, the fact that I come from a small trespassed-upon nation. These things as much as conscience governed my action. A week later when I read harrowing accounts of Egyptian refugees I had no inclination to reverse my decision.

Now there are other wars to which I lend neither emotional, physical, nor financial support (*e.g.*, Viet Nam). Causes come through the letter box three times a day. Discrimination is both necessary and healthy. It is not simply true that there are the refusers and the yes-ers. (Undoubtedly there are those who appear to muster up the same righteousness for the cause of horse-meat as for the cause of people but I have no wish to consider them.) Certain wrongs when they happen at a given moment and we happen at that same moment to feel urgently about them propel us into action. Our effectiveness is impossible to gauge beforehand, and is infinitely disputable afterwards. The fact that we are writers should be irrelevant. It is a social accident if the intelligent writer is given more credence than the intelligent plumber: an accident that the writer can hardly be asked to apologise for. When speculating on our predecessors we might fairly say that asked to support a given issue Proust might not, T. S. Eliot would not, Tolstoy would. To me Tolstoy is the giant among them and I believe that his godliness as a writer is aligned to his godliness as a human being.

Robert Ardrey:

OVER HALF A CENTURY AGO Eliot Howard, the British creator of the biological concept of territory, was observing lapwings on a water-meadow beside the River Severn. Lapwings winter in large flocks. By February, however, the males begin to detach themselves from the flock to establish isolated breeding territories. But the spring of 1916 was very late, and by March only two had gained domains in the meadow. These they guarded from each other and from all intruders. Then one morning the flock, numbering upwards of a hundred, landed on the territories to feed. The two proprietors went from bird to bird, challenging, displaying, until the entire flock had fled.

Twenty years later David Lack, then a Devon schoolmaster, was studying robins. He captured a male, caged it, and placed the cage in the middle of the robin's territory. Imprisoned, apparently helpless, the proprietor nevertheless drove off every territorial intruder by the sheer ferocity of song and display.

Only a few years ago in Central Africa Helmut Buechner and Walter Leuthold were in the midst of their classic study of the Uganda kob, a powerful antelope with swept-back spreading horns and a pugnacious disposition. Out of a population of perhaps a thousand, a dozen or so élite males occupy tiny territories in an arena little larger than a football field. There they indulge in their twin delights, fighting with

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each other and copulating with dazzled does. On such an arena the human observers watched a male, for eight days, successfully defend his bit of space despite all challenge, and despite a broken leg.

On arenas more newsworthy the human observer has recently been privileged to watch comparable wonders performed by members of his own species. In South-east Asia a relatively primitive people have for years successfully resisted the territorial intrusion of the world's most powerful military machine. As I have written elsewhere, never has a David appeared more heroic, or a Goliath more foolish. And now, in the Middle East, our attention has been called to a small if more sophisticated people on a smaller and more vulnerable land. Surrounded, vastly outnumbered, confronted by the declared threat of intrusion on the part of enemies equipped for battle by the world's second most powerful military machine, they have annihilated that threat in a few thundering, inexplicable days.

Ethology is a new science, too new to have contributed to the moulding of contemporary philosophies whether academic or political or military. In ENCOUNTER's review of *The Territorial Imperative* [June], Geoffrey Gorer, entirely in accord with most current teaching, dismissed the proposition that man is a territorial species obeying by genetic disposition certain laws more ancient than ourselves. And while I too respect our magnificent brain as I admire extravagantly our occasional successful excursions into rationality, I submit that there are lessons to be learned from animal behaviour concerning the nature of man. And had the leaders of the intruding powers learned their lessons, neither the Israeli nor Vietnamese wars would have occurred.

Ethology in its concern for the biology of behaviour is so young a science as to have as yet few durable conclusions to present. There are two, however, broadly observed and as broadly validated, that concern us here. The first, based on tens of thousands of animal observations, is that in territorial conflicts the proprietor almost always wins. We do not know why, but the phenomenon is definitely of a biological order. The threat or reality of intrusion induces in the proprietor an enhancement of energy unavailable to the intruder, and tending to equalise or overcome any advantage of size or strength which the intruder may possess. And the second conclusion, less widely observed but as universally validated, concerns territorial species in which defence is conducted by a group. In all such species, like the howling monkey or the black lemur, the threat of intrusion not only multiplies the energy of every defending partner but commands a degree of unity and co-operation in proportion to present danger.

The territorial principle is evolution's most successful defence mechanism. And if man is a territorial species, then perhaps we can comprehend and predict what political and military logic could not: why, for example, the bombing of North Viet Nam has magnified, not diminished, the American nightmare. Hitler's *Luftwaffe*, as I recall, accomplished much the same feat in Britain.

In the language of ethology territory is a genetically determined behaviour pattern. Much of our resistance to the growing evidence that human behaviour is regulated by instinct as well as rationality rests on an act of faith, a comforting belief in human uniqueness. But much also rests on the accepted but outmoded interpretation of instinct as a genetic behavioural command, totally pre-programmed and beyond modification. Such closed instincts, common in insects, are demonstrably rare in higher animals. But the open instinct—ethology's genetically determined behaviour pattern—presents an inherited pattern of behaviour, common to the species, which to operate must be filled out with the learning and experience of the individual.

We may look at any member of a territorial species. An innate pattern of evolutionary origin commands him to defend an exclusive area of space. But to fill out the pattern he must gain a territory, learn its whereabouts, borders, terrain, resources. He must and will learn through experience the character of those potential intruders, his neighbours, and to discriminate between the more and less dangerous. And if he is a member of a group defending a common domain, then he must learn as well the character of every individual among his social partners, who is strong, who is weak, who leads, who follows. But when intrusion threatens, then all his learning will be placed at the disposal of the innate command to defend.

I find little difference in kind between the territorial behaviour of man and that of other territorial animal species. We defend our homes and homelands not because we choose but because we must. And in so doing we gain a biological advantage which that young thing, the human brain, cannot command.

A major thesis of *The Territorial Imperative*, ignored in the ENCOUNTER review, states that ignorance of the territorial principle has been a major cause for most modern wars. Ignorance on the part of the defender is of small moment, since he will act according to genetic compulsion. But ignorance on the part of the intruder, as in all logic he draws up his military balance sheets, leads in high probability to catastrophe.

So it was, I believe, in Israel and Viet Nam.

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And so it is now that we the mighty—the Russians, the Americans—are privileged to survey in all pain, in all frustration, in all honest bewilderment, the ruins lying about us. Precious Soviet resources have found their home in Sinai sands. An American policy of escalation has succeeded in nothing but escalating a people's power to resist. The Israeli and the Vietnamese have done their almighty best to prove that man is a territorial animal, and some day perhaps we shall learn. In the meantime, however, we the intruders, prisoners of a logic no larger than man's time, will plod on along our accustomed way committing further wealth to foreseeable ruins, further youth to predictable graves.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri:

WHETHER writers *qua* writers should or should not involve themselves in public affairs is, to my thinking, a pointless argument. There is no *should* in it, because the involvement is determined by the personality of the writer in question. Just as some animals are carnivorous and others herbivorous, so some writers will be *engagé*, and others *désengagé*. The scribbling carnivores who feed on the living flesh of current affairs have at least great forbears: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Plato, Cicero, Tacitus, Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Voltaire, Hugo;—and why not Maurras, Barrès, or Péguy, for they were no worse writers than the uninvolved literary fops of today? For myself, I would say—I am not ashamed that all my books are *livres de circonstance*, but should be if they were nothing more. *That* is the question.

So, I did feel involved in the recent fighting between Israel and the Arabs, and I have considered it my duty to write in the Indian Press in support of Israel against the policy of our Government, which is blindly pro-Arab. A short visit to Israel just before the war made the interest I would in any case have felt, more actual. Having seen the people I had no qualms about the result, the satisfaction from which was expected. The unexpected part of the satisfaction came from another source—from a feeling that Israel had at last pointed a way out from the crushing sense of frustration that comes from having to bear intolerable economic burdens and mental strain indefinitely, without any freedom to act in the interest of one's people.

It is to this that all the smaller countries are condemned by the *raison d'état* pursued by the United States and the Soviet Union. They are pitted against each other for reasons into which I need not go. The fact is that they want to eliminate each other from world politics. In former ages they would have gone to war. But the new weapons make them shrink from the final arbitrament. It is their choice, and as a second best they are carrying on an armament race and a diplomatic war whose bad manners are unprecedented. This freezing of an irreconcilable conflict short of war, is like remaining with a tumour short of operation. Nevertheless, it has not done any great harm to the two Powers, because both have sufficient economic strength to treat the military expenditure as incidental, and sufficient vitality to treat the Cold War like a common cold.

But it is otherwise with the smaller countries. They have their own deep-seated rivalries, but no strength to bear the economic burden and no vitality to endure the mental strain. Yet they cannot resolve the conflicts. The Great Powers will not allow them to go to war, for fear of being dragged into it, and they would not impose just solutions of their own because they are never able to agree. Sorel said about the international morality of the eighteenth century: *La vieille Europe finit par une banqueroute cynique*. In respect of the smaller countries, the Great Powers of today are even more cynical and bankrupt.

Its result has been awful. Most of the countries are being strangled by military expenditure, but will not reduce it on account of their rancours. The psychological tension is even worse. There is no release from it through the only effectual remedy—action. So, from day to day, these peoples are becoming less and less capable of sane policies and more and more prone to collective neurosis. The Great Powers are driving them to it.

Israel has at all events defied the Great Powers, and broken out of the prison of despair. It has refused to be strangled or to go mad. So far, it has done good to itself, and may do good even to the Arabs if the Great Powers will not meddle.

Instead, they can make it the starting point of a new policy. Why should they not disinterest themselves in the smaller countries, and if it comes to that allow them to fight out their quarrels, of course fixing the length of the rope: that is telling them that if they employ nuclear weapons they will be wiped out by themselves —the master Powers? This would restore the natural play of power in the relations of the minor countries, and create conditions which will be better than the septic peace they now enjoy.

I know that this will never become the policy of the Great Powers, but that should not deprive Israel of the credit for showing a way out of the frustration to which the United States and the Soviet Union are pinning the smaller countries.

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John Mander:

RECENT EVENTS, if they have done nothing else, would seem to have re-established war as the most popular international sport. It has been fashionable for a decade or more—but particularly since the Cuban crisis of 1962—to speak disparagingly of war: war settles nothing, war creates more problems than it solves, war is no longer *possible* in our time. How different things look in the summer of 1967! War, every variety of it, is proving both possible and popular. Viet Nam has shown that a tough, dedicated guerrilla army can withstand, apparently indefinitely, the devil's armoury of the Pentagon. In Nigeria one black politician emulates Lincoln in imposing federal rule by force; another, in America, advocates the secession by force of the black tenth of the nation. And, as if to demonstrate that war in our time need not be long, bloody, and tedious, the Israelis have shown that it is possible to smash three armies in as many days.

What do the intellectuals think about it all? And what should they think? From those lists in the newspapers, got together from time to time by our stage-army of protestants, one might think that to be intellectual was to be pacifist, that war is distasteful to the cultivated mind. But is this so? In Western Europe, at least, the majority of intellectuals would seem to be anti-American in Viet Nam and anti-Arab in the Middle East (more adamantly so in France and Germany than in this country). Yet motives are strangely mixed. Are intellectuals anti-American because they regard America as an aggressor, or as an unsuccessful aggressor? How far, beneath the protests at American violence, is there active or passive connivance at the violence of the Viet Cong? Few of our protestants have spoken openly as yet of "arms for Hanoi"; yet many have just that in mind. And, indeed, why not? If Ho Chi-minh's cause is comparable to that of the Spanish Republic, why should committed intellectuals not collect, indeed fight for it? That so few seem willing to take up that position gives pause for thought. It was not so in the 1930s. Is it cowardice, or muddled thinking, or a kind of hypocrisy? My own guess is that it is the latter: the right hand still holds aloft the old, liberal pale-blue flag of the UN, the left hand itches for a gun.

The Arab-Israeli war has perhaps given the game away. A highly successful (if provoked) act of aggression was greeted with enthusiasm by most West European intellectuals. The blue flag, convenient fig-leaf in Korea and Katanga, came in only for derision. Euphoric identification with Israel's *blitzkrieg* was the rule. Now, in registering this, I am not by any means condemning Israel. Personally, I am glad that Israel won, that the Arabs were not permitted to impose their will on her, just as I am glad that Hanoi will not be permitted to impose her will on the people of South Viet Nam. But how explain the enthusiasm for Israel's victory among so many of the Third-World-befriending, profoundly anti-militarist intellectuals of Western Europe? Is it perhaps that beneath these attitudes there lies something very different—a long-frustrated wish to revenge the humiliations of the past twenty years, to take it out on the fuzzy-wuzzies, as the "European" Israelis decidedly did? Is it possible, further, that the anti-Americanism of European intellectuals expresses, not so much a wish for the triumph of North Viet Nam's peasant army, as for an American humiliation? I detected, I thought, an audible sigh of relief the day the Israeli air force took out the Arabs' air power. It was the end, somehow, of the years of hypocrisy: the game could start anew. The big Cold War was over. Were the small hot wars now to begin?

Max Beloff:

THE ARAB-ISRAELI war produced the expected reactions from British intellectuals. To begin with there was very general sympathy for Israel based upon the fact that it might be in danger of imminent destruction. Once Israel had won the war, a number of people made a rapid switch back to their natural sympathies with the underdog and with the "underdeveloped"—if only Franco had had the sense to make out that Spain was "underdeveloped" in the 1930s, he might have enjoyed all that sympathy on the British Left that now goes to Colonel Nasser who is certainly no less of a fascist dictator, and indeed in some respects rather more of one. So we get lots of advice to Israel to show "magnanimity" towards its would-be destroyers going so far in the intellectuals' favourite newspaper the *Observer*, as to suggest that Israel not merely restores all the territory which she has won but makes actual territorial concessions to her hostile neighbours on top of this.

One change in a decade has been the position of the Jewish M.P.s in the Labour Party—if they can be regarded as intellectuals. In 1956, they were prepared (except for Mr. Shinwell) to follow Gaitskell in calling Israel's campaign in Sinai—"aggression"—this time they chose to identify themselves with Israel. Since Israel's reasons for fighting were identical in the two

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cases—self-defence—there is some lack of consistency here.

Personally I have found no dilemma. As a Jew, wholly unconnected with any Zionist organisation, I felt free to follow natural and obvious sympathies which did not clash with any other principle I recognise as valid. I thought Israel in the right in 1956 and in the right in 1967, because a national community once established has the right of existence, and because Arab hostility seems to me to arise not from Arab "grievances" most of which are remediable, but from the sense of inferiority that Arab governments feel in the face of their own record of political and social failure. In a war waged by the destructive aspects of nationalism against its constructive aspects, I have no doubt where one's sympathies should lie.

On the other hand, I do not think that one can give *carte blanche* to any government, certainly not to any foreign government. If there are Israeli policies of which I disapprove there seems no reason why I should not say so; on the other hand, there seems to me no more obligation upon the Israeli government to accept other people's judgments upon its policies, than there is in the case of any other civilised government. A "decent respect to the opinions of mankind" is all one can ask for.

But there is another aspect of the matter, and that is that judgment on a complex international situation demands some willingness not only to observe consistent criteria, but also to have some idea of the facts of the situation. My own views are after all not those of any intellectual but of someone professionally concerned with the study of politics. I am doubtful whether commitment even of this limited kind is meaningful in the case of creative or performing artists or other intellectuals whose sphere gives them no special knowledge of or insight into political problems. Of course this does not mean they should not have views and express them—but they have no right to expect any particular weight to be given to them. If a Jewish (or Gentile) actor, painter, or poet expresses sympathy with Israel, this is no less and no more meaningful than if it were a Jewish (or Gentile) tailor, shop-keeper or bus-driver.

That is why I am irritated by collective expressions of opinion—manifestos, meetings, etc.—even when they are on "my side," as it were. I do not think that a case gets added weight because a lot of people who have no particular insight into the issue sign their names to a statement. The explanation why they nevertheless do behave in this way is not hard to discern. Many intellectuals are frustrated men of action—if you cannot go and fight for Israel, you can at least sign for Israel. (This is not altogether a bad thing; money-raising which is of great practical value would be much harder if signing cheques were not a psychological substitute for action.) Also of course people think that public opinion at large and so the political process can be affected by such demonstrations. I do not find this very plausible—least of all in Britain where intellectuals are not taken too seriously—but people who feel strongly in a cause can hardly be blamed for trying. Like the *"jongleur de Notre Dame"* one can only give what one has. In the case of many intellectuals a name is all they have.

The final observation is that the interest of intellectuals in causes appears to be highly dependent upon great and dramatic events. Most of the problems of the Middle East—including its humanitarian problems—have existed for some twenty years, yet it takes war to make people aware of them. It is certain that the path towards peace will be long and arduous, and intellectuals should have something to contribute to peace-making which depends so much upon mental attitudes as well as material decisions. But one feels that most of the intellectuals will have shifted their interest to some new scene of conflict and carnage such as the world seems only too ready to supply.

Tibor Szamuely:

THE WESTERN INTELLECTUALS' approach to the political developments of the last few years has been distinguished, it seems to me, by two essential qualities. One is the apparent alignment of the most vocal section of the intellectual community with what is broadly termed "the Left." There exists today a rigid set of orthodox progressive ideas, a kind of portable intellectual medicine-chest lined with dozens of neatly labelled ideological nostrums for every occasion: Abortion, Aden, Advertising, Afro-Asia, Big Business, Birth Control, Catholic Church, Censorship, Colonialism, etc., etc. . . . through the whole litany, down to UN, Unilateralism, Viet Nam, War-toys, Wilson, Yemen, Zambia and Zionism. One always knows beforehand, with infinite boredom, just what the progressive intellectual's position is going to be on any conceivable issue. This is one of the reasons why the Middle East crisis, like the Hungarian Revolution before it, was so important: it overturned the medicine chest, smashing the pre-packed panaceas, wreaking havoc among the certitudes.

The other striking—and paradoxical—aspect of the "progressive" intellectuals' involvement in politics is the fundamentally ***non-intellectual***

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nature of their commitment. However sincere and deep-felt, it is almost invariably an *emotional* attitude, owing very little, if anything, to the processes of reasoning and study that one usually associates with the word "intellectual." (Perhaps this is why actors and actresses have suddenly become so prominent in various "intellectual" political manifestations.) It is, for instance, practically impossible to carry on a rational argument about Viet Nam, to hear a case against US policy made in coherent, analytical, factual terms. What one gets is a confused mélange of overwrought emotive phrases: "people are being killed there," "the Americans have no right to be in Asia," "white men are killing coloured people," and so on.

Or take another example: the words "fascist" and "fascism" have now lost any meaning they originally possessed, and have become no more than emotive expressions, applied indiscriminately to any politician, policy, or régime of which the Left happens to disapprove. Today the "progressive" intellectual appears to have absolved himself from having to argue his case, from collecting the facts, mustering the evidence, demolishing his opponent point by point—things at which genuine radical intellectuals like Marx used to excel. All this has been done away with now: it is quite sufficient to cry "Fascist!"—and a great emotional groundswell of instant images and lurid associations will effectively drown out any timid voices asking for proof of the accusation. Curiously enough, the very same scholar who feels no compunction about hurling the charge of "fascism" at any political opponent in sight would never dream of using similar methods in his professional teaching or research work. That is quite different: there he scrupulously adheres to the highest standards of evidence and analysis. Intellectual standards are renounced in favour of emotions only when it comes to involvement in the political issues of the day.

It was not always thus. Thirty years ago the progressive intellectual would swear by Marxism—which, whatever one can say about it, was certainly a rational system of thought. But since then life has consisted of one disappointment after another: the patent failure of the collectivist economy, as against the achievements of capitalism in raising living standards; the stubborn refusal of Communist totalitarianism to become democratic; the appalling and increasingly hopeless mess in Afro-Asia. Every traditional pillar of the progressive *Weltanschauung* has crumbled to dust. A choice had to be made: either one looked the facts in the face and made an agonising re-appraisal, or one firmly shut one's eyes to reality. It is, I believe, this desperate escape from an unpalatable reality into a never-never world of imaginary heroes (Lumumba, Nyerere, Castro, *et al.*) and mythical villains (LBJ and a host of lesser demons), of non-existent causes and artificial emotions, that characterises the "progressive" approach to politics. Facts and realities—whether of Soviet labour camps, East European political trials, African massacres, or Indian misrule—are not allowed to intrude into this cosy world of make-believe. Secure under the protection of US firepower—and knowing this, and hating himself for knowing it—the intellectual cries out for more stories of American atrocities. No horrendous anti-Western tales are too incredible to be disbelieved, no facts about Communism or the Third World sufficiently well-documented to be accepted. The liberal intelligentsia has replaced reason by faith, rational judgements by visceral reactions.

But what, one may ask, is there wrong with being guided by emotion in politics? A great deal. For one thing, these emotions are hardly the noble humanitarian ideals they are made out to be. Compassion for human suffering? Then how can they cast a blind eye on the continuing slaughter of tens of thousands in the Yemen, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Congo, Sudan, and a great many other places. Devotion to democracy and human rights? Then how can they be seeking out every possible extenuating circumstance in favour of unreconstructed Communist totalitarianism and "progressive" dictatorships in the Third World. Hatred of war and violence? Then how explain the martial postures over the Middle East, to say nothing of the open admiration for the Viet Cong and other "freedom fighters"?

Orwell exposed this stance years ago:

> There is a minority of intellectual pacifists whose real though unadmitted motive appears to be hatred of Western democracy and admiration for totalitarianism. . . . If one looks closely at the writings of the younger intellectual pacifists, one finds that they do not by any means express impartial disapproval but are directed almost entirely against Britain and the United States. Moreover they do not as a rule condemn violence as such, but only violence used in defence of the Western countries.

All this is as true today as it was then.

The real mainspring of intellectual emotionalism seems to be a strange compound of irrational guilt, self-hatred, anti-Americanism, wishful thinking, power-worship, and arrogance. A considerable element of hypocrisy comes into it as well. "We all, of course, abhor dictatorship and violence," they proclaim, "but in those remote, underdeveloped places there seems to be no other solution—and besides, the poor fellows wouldn't really know the difference anyway. . . ." It is very easy for the Anglo-Saxon

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intellectual to scoff at democracy and to gloss over such things as censorship, secret police, or concentration camps—fortunately, he knows of them only by hearsay. One could even formulate the following proposition as a general law of politics: the extent of progressive feeling among the intellectuals of any given country is in direct proportion to the distance between that country and the nearest totalitarian dictatorship.

I am afraid that our emotional intelligentsia is perpetrating an imposture upon society. Intellectuals demand special consideration for their views *qua* intellectuals—because theirs are trained minds, capable of intense mental concentration, possessing a fund of specialist knowledge, used to analysing the facts and establishing the truth in a detached spirit of scientific inquiry. This is why, they argue, governments should pay the greatest attention to their opinions. And it is under these false pretences that attempts are made to palm off on an unsuspecting public a jumble of tortured emotional attitudes dressed up as a reasoned, cogent, and substantiated intellectual case.

The Anglo-Saxon nations have a long tradition of keeping intellectuals away from power and of not paying any attention to their political views. On present form there seems to be every justification for upholding it in the future.

Kingsley Amis:

MY SYMPATHIES over the Middle East war were entirely with Israel. I was ready to sign and demonstrate and the rest of it on her behalf, but as things turned out her forces were able to finish the job without my aid. Even so, to have made some such tiny contribution on her side would not necessarily, I suggest, have been ridiculous. Apart from my instinctive sympathy with any Jewish cause and my (I hope) less emotional conviction that this cause was a just one, I was also moved by the knowledge that Israel's enemies had Russian backing.

To do something, however trifling and however economical of effort, towards opposing the interests of totalitarianism is in the interests of any intellectual. (I think it is his duty too, but let that pass.) As Irving Kristol pointed out recently, the intellectual has special reasons for hating and fearing Communism. A bus-driver or a TV vision-mixer need only suffer its oppression as a citizen; a writer or a painter has the tyrants looking over his shoulder as soon as he starts work. To advertise to one's fellows this fact and its implications is little enough, but to do less would be frivolous.

James Cameron:

THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT of the artist is something that has always interested me without involving me, as I am not an artist. It would seem to me quite feasible for a painter or a poet to work successfully for a lifetime without revealing any political attitude at all, or even having one, since he works within the context of a self-made world. The journalist, however, whose field is in contemporary human affairs—which are now in almost every case related to politics in one way or another—must in my opinion concern himself personally in their quality, in the sense that I would expect a sculptor to concern himself in the texture of stone. The difference is that the artist can approve or reject his raw material without passing moral judgments on it. If he finds himself landed with a rotten piece of stone he can throw it away; if we find ourselves stuck with a rotten Prime Minister we can't, or not so easily, and only by turning a personal opinion into a public one. We have the advantage, of course, that it is often easier to make a professionally more satisfying article out of a rotten PM than a good one; that is not to say that even journalists might not sooner have good government than good editorials.

My own personal position is rather odd. Over the last few weeks I have had a good deal of critical judgment passed on me and my work, most of it as embarrassing as it was well intentioned. Already the words "conscience" and "crusade" and the like clung around my neck like albatrosses; I am portrayed as a whey-faced prophet of doom forever scribbling Jeremiads on the ills of mankind; the *New Statesman* depicts me on the cover page in the likeness of Don Quixote. All this, while flattering indeed, is disconcerting to one who has all his life believed himself to be wholly otherwise, and who now approaches old friends with a light laugh and a merry thought only to see them flinch and bow their heads and await the Sermon from the Mount.

All this arises from the fact that as a journalist I have indeed felt obliged for some time to concern myself individually with some of the events, situations, paradoxes of the antic international scene it has been my trade to report. Not all, by any means, but some. I have never done this as an act of policy; on the contrary there have been times when what I felt to be a personal involvement was a terrible nuisance, since anything that stretches the emotions in the business of making a living makes that business the more troublesome. It produced some peculiar results: people began to identify me as a person

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with many of the woeful nonsenses it was my business to describe. Because, for example, I was the British observer at Bikini, and among the earliest to sound off about the beastliness of the Bomb, I learned to live with the reproaches both of the pro-Bomb people, because I was anti, and the anti-Bomb people, because I was there. Even Malcolm Muggeridge the other day in an extremely generous review of a book of mine, made this strange reversal of cause and effect, associating the catastrophes with those who report them. "Are they carriers of some fearful plague," he wrote, "figures of doom whose mere appearance is sufficient to dry up the harvests and bring out the execution squads?" There is, of course, just enough germ of truth in this to make one uneasy.

In my own case it can at least be said that such opinions as I own have never been especially secret. I have never tried to be a polemicist, but I suppose I have my ration of prejudices, and there are certain attitudes to which I am emotionally drawn. I have never thought that this should have invalidated me as a reporter of fact, provided the facts were there, and presented honestly enough to stand as witness *against* my own views, if they warranted it. If I wrote about atom-bombs it was in the proclaimed light of the fact that I not only supported *CND* but had been on its first Executive Committee. If I wrote about the Viet Nam war it was to deplore it. After I had been to Hanoi I thought it as well to take the bull by the horns and so went straight to the United States, where I had a moderately rough time on the television, the grounds for challenge being that the stuff I had written about the war was not consistent with my function as an objective journalist. To this I could but reply that I had never in my life presented myself as an objective journalist, and that I did not see how a reporter attempting to define a situation involving some sort of direct ethical conflict could do it with sufficient demonstrable neutrality to fulfil some arbitrary concept of "objectivity". I may often have been insufficiently balanced; I always tended to argue that objectivity was of less importance than the truth, and that the reporter, informed by no opinion at all lacked an important dimension. This can be misrepresented. I would only argue the simplest of disciplines: that the journalist present his attitude as vigorously and as persuasively as he can, making clear that it is his attitude, to be examined in the light of every contrary argument, which he must reveal even though he does not accept it. Every reasonable journalist understands this proposition. He can present his principles for consideration on the basis of moral independence—which of course includes the need to question *him*. The useful end of this *should* be to encourage an attitude of mind that will challenge and criticise automatically, thus to destroy or weaken the built-in advantages of all propaganda and special pleading—including his own.

Her friend is dead

For Kathy

Her face clawed by the Angel with cold fingers,
at midnight she will suddenly wake and scream
and hear the feathers rattle in the dark
spiralling into silence. Dream, dream

and the little knuckles wrenching at the sheets.
Tomorrow she will ask the nuns again
where Meegan's gone to. But she won't hear their lies.
A terrible knowledge whispers through her brain.

Her school friends wonder why she glares at them.
They run off twittering in the gay sunlight.
But she is followed by a dark companion,
one inch behind her and just out of sight.

Craig Powell

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Count Harry Kessler

In the 'Twenties

Diary of a Vanished Age (III)

Berlin, 29 October, 1928

Saw Ferdinand Bruckner's *Criminals*, of which the theme is that we are all criminals or, alternatively, there are no criminals but only circumstances, *milieux*, that make criminals—Rousseau's ideas. It was not particularly good; only the huge stage divided into six scenes and the way homosexual themes are brought out give the play an appearance of originality. This homosexual strain is even broader and less disguised than in Heinrich Mann's *Bibi* and the audience does not take the least offence; not even at a quite unambiguous scene, in a set that can only be described as a "boudoir," where an elegant young man takes a blond boy who looked to be about 16 on to his lap and embraces and kisses him. For theatregoers the whole question seems to be settled, not even news any more. The sexual attraction between women and between men and boys is accepted as naturally as in ancient Greece—although as yet only in the theatre!

Berlin, 30 October, 1928

An evening at Piscator's attractive flat designed by Walter Gropius, "*sachlich*" but pleasant, and it makes a good setting for the party: forty or fifty people kept coming in until after midnight, among them many actors and actresses. I met Bert Brecht there. A striking decadent head, almost a criminal physiognomy; black hair, dark skin, a peculiarly watching expression almost like a typical *ganove*. But in conversation he thaws, seems almost naïve. I told him anecdotes of D'Annunzio which seemed to amuse him highly. He is certainly "somebody," certainly in presence, and not unsympathetic.

There was talk again of the idea of making a film by cutting together news and historical films. Georg Grosz was opposed to the idea, or at any rate very critical. "It might make an interesting document, but reality is not enough for me. You see, I am a kind of artist and one has to reach for the elusive, the fabulous. The camera can collect all sorts of interesting scraps. But it can never approach the magical effects of a drawing." Grosz seems recently to be moving away from realism. He complains that in our time everything is rationalised and hardly any understanding left for irrational human needs. What the Left wants—the improvement

Sebba

Bertold Brecht

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of living conditions, health, and the like for the mass of the people—that should all be taken for granted by any man with feelings. But that's only a beginning, not a goal in itself; that is what no one understands....

Paris, 27 December, 1928

DIAGHILEV BALLET at the Opera, *Rossignol* and *Petrouchka* by Stravinsky. I waited for Diaghilev afterwards in the backstage corridors until he came out with a short, haggard young man in a tattered coat. He asked: "Don't you know him?" "No, really, I'm afraid I don't remember...." Diaghilev: "But it is Nijinsky!" *Nijinsky*! It was like a clap of thunder. This face so often illumined like a God's, an unforgettable experience for thousands, now grey, slack, empty, lighted only for an instant with a mindless smile, a momentary appearance of understanding like the flicker of a dying flame. He didn't utter a sound. Diaghilev had hold of him under one arm; and to go down the three flights of stairs he asked me to support him on the other side. This Nijinsky who once seemed able to leap over houses had to feel his way, uncertain and nervous, from step to step downstairs. I took his hand and pressed the thin fingers, tried to encourage him with gentle words. Mindlessly but infinitely touching, he gazed at me with his great eyes like a sick animal. Laboriously, slowly, we descended the three endless stairways to his car, into which he was half-lifted without a single word. Numbly he sat down between two women, who seemed to be in charge of him, and was driven away. Diaghilev had not been able to tell whether Nijinsky had recognised *Petrouchka*, once his finest role, but said he had been like a child not wanting to leave the theatre. Diaghilev kissed Nijinsky on the brow as he said goodbye. Then we went to the Restaurant de la Paix where we sat late with Karsavina, Misia Sert, Gordon Craig, and Alfred Savoir. But I was not really taking part, I could not get the meeting with Nijinsky out of my mind. A human being who had been burned out. Inconceivable, but perhaps even less conceivable, more tragic, that a relationship, a passion between two people burns out and leaves nothing but a slight flicker to light for a second the despairing and lifeless remains.

Paris, 29 December, 1928

AT LUNCH Diaghilev, Lifar, and others talked of my ballet, but Diaghilev is still against using Kurt Weill for the music. "We shall have to find you a musician," he said; and further, that Weill's music was nothing but Donizetti with the sprinkling of false notes needed to camouflage it, false notes that always turned up at the right moment. He talked with the greatest admiration about Berlin. During his week there in October he had never known what theatre to choose in the evening, there was so much going on. Berlin was the only capital city he had never been able to conquer. He had had triumphs in all the other great cities of the world, but in Berlin "I felt like a student in love with an accomplished woman who could never find just the right words to convince her of his love...." His Berlin experiments always ended in financial disaster, with deficits of hundreds of thousands of francs.

Berlin, 4 January, 1929

AT DINNER Richard von Kuehlmann, State Secretary, German Foreign Office, told us with pride how he had crossed swords dialectically with Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk. It had seemed to him important to defeat Trotsky in argument. I find this personal vanity over "dialectics," this concern with verbal non-essentials, quite extraordinary at a moment of history when the fate of Germany hung in the balance. It is especially strange that he still prides himself on it now, after eleven years, when the disastrous results of Brest-Litovsk are so clear. A "collector," a dilettante.

Berlin, 22 January, 1929

MRS. HAROLD NICOLSON (V. Sackville-West) and Virginia and Leonard Woolf came to tea. Virginia Woolf is a tall, rather dry woman, no longer young and with a somewhat decadent appearance, but with the pleasant manners of the well-bred Englishwoman. Leonard Woolf, very nervous, trembles when he speaks, clever, imaginative. We discussed Mrs. Nicolson's translation of Rilke for my Cranach Press. Virginia Woolf is typically upper-middle class of the best kind, the daughter of a Professor. And Mrs. Nicolson, an equally typical noblewoman, a great lady, long and slender, with light easy manners, of the greatest elegance that shows in her every movement: a person who has never known a moment's embarrassment or any social barrier.

Berlin, 23 April, 1929

CONCERT by the young Yehudi Menuhin. The boy is truly marvellous; his playing has the

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godlike inspiration of genius and the purity of a child. His fantastic virtuosity remains secondary, taken for granted. A wonderful feeling for style and not the slightest suggestion of trashiness or sentimentality; on the contrary, a pure and deep sensibility. He played Beethoven's *Romanze in F-Dur* (opus 50) as I had only before heard it played by Joseph Joachim.

London, 13 May, 1929

DINED AT THE Savoy and saw *Journey's End* at the Savoy Theatre afterwards. The play is having a success like that of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* at home. There are several strong scenes, but too much "funny business" for my taste. The oddest thing about it was the audience which laughed freely, so heartily that the terrible tragedy of the whole situation was, as it were, scattered between jokes.

Berlin, 22 May, 1929

THE "Scala's" great performance at the *Staatsoper* at which Toscanini conducted *Falstaff*. Glittering audience, glittering production, "*tout Berlin*" was there and enthusiastic. Toscanini conducted brilliantly, with a verve, delicacy, and sureness that were both overpowering and enchanting. My impression was, however, more glitter than depth; one is not moved by it. The Lord Mayor of Milan added to the gaiety of the evening by keeping two gigantic lackeys in scarlet livery standing stiffly in his box throughout the performance.

The next evening, Toscanini again, *Rigoletto*. Enormous enthusiasm among the audience, which included Stresemann; I am bored by this music, dusty bombinating romanticism swelling up over improbable situations.

MARCEL PROUST

Berlin, 23 May, 1929

I WENT OUT to tea to meet Paul Morand and his wife, who turned out to be an old acquaintance whom I knew before the War as a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Rumania. She reminded me at once of an amusing occasion at Countess Greffulhe's when Edmond Rostand almost knelt before the Queen, assuring her gushingly that she was the original of his *Princesse Lointaine*. Then she told a very characteristic story about Marcel Proust, whom we had both met at Larue's. One night during the War he was at Larue's and wanted music, although music in cafés was then forbidden. Proust insisted however, and finally said if there was no music to be had there he would go and fetch the *Quatuour Poulet*. He went out to look for the Quartet, but when he had not returned by two o'clock Mme Morand, then the Princess Soutzo, had gone back to her hotel, the Ritz. Between three and four she was awakened suddenly by Proust. He announced that the *Quatuour Poulet* was downstairs in the hall except for the double bass who was, unfortunately, ill with pneumonia. He therefore regretted that the Quartet could not play for her that night.

Berlin, 15–16 July, 1929

READ IN THE paper that Hugo von Hofmannsthal's elder son, Franz, had shot himself. I sent him a telegram. In the evening went to Erich von Stroheim's film about Vienna before the War, *Wedding March*. It is a creation of genius that shows with the savagery of a George Grosz all the hollowness of the glamour of *Alt-Wien*, and the legendary sugary Viennese *Kitsch* (not to mention that of Hollywood as well)—all that had always fascinated and dazzled Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and here is the reverse of the coin.

Hofmannsthal died at the funeral of his son, of shock at the suicide. I am completely stunned. Ours is a tragic generation and a tragic circle of friends—Walter Rathenau, Paul Cassirer, von Hofmannsthal. . . .

Vienna, 18 July, 1929

ARRIVED HERE early for the funeral of poor Hugo. The funeral service was held at 3 p.m. in the parish church at Rodaun. Coffin, altar,

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and altar railings disappeared under a sea of roses. Every garden of Vienna must have been plundered to produce such magnificence. The little church was full to bursting. I sat behind Richard Strauss' son, but both Strauss himself and Max Reinhardt were noticeable by their absence. The service was not very impressive in spite of a lovely violin solo.

The church was surrounded by a great crowd of the curious from Vienna; women in light summer dresses, a number of Americans, and many peasants and tradesmen from the district. Several thousand people attached themselves to the funeral procession to the cemetery, and the crowd and the heat gradually ruined any chance of reverence. I walked with another close friend of Hugo's who also suffered from these circumstances, in spite of our grief. At the entrance to the cemetery there was a positively scandalous scene, where the mourners and the sensation-seekers were involved in a wild scramble to get past the police to the grave, which turned into a real squabble. Finally we were allowed in, but there was no feeling of awe left at all; it was more like a fairground in the oppressive heat. I caught one glimpse into the grave as I scattered earth on the coffin, and was struck by the narrowness and smallness of the coffin, under which one could still see the coffin of the son who had shot himself. Then it was all over.

Colin Spencer

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

Part of my life is gone with Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Only a week ago he was writing to our friend Goertz of our long and constant relationship. The last time I saw him was that ill-humoured, unfortunate luncheon a year ago in June when Richard Strauss talked such nonsense that Hofmannsthal wrote afterwards to apologise for it.

Vienna, 19 July, 1929

WAS driven out to Schönbrunn, where I sat and read Hofmannsthal's ***Everyman,*** and after lunch I went out to Rodaun and found Gerty Hofmannsthal (Frau von Hofmannsthal), Raimund, and the rest of the family, were wonderfully composed, almost gay. Gerty said (and this is her comfort) that the suicide was not the cause of Hugo's death; he had been given up by the doctors three years ago because of the hardening of his arteries. After Franz's death he had been quite calm, went on with his normal life, wrote a lot of letters and had long talks with herself and Raimund about their other son's death, wonderful talks. All the same, he had also wept a great deal, and very bitterly. He got up at his normal time on that Monday and came to meals, quite as usual. At three they were to go to Franz's funeral, and as he put on his hat Hugo said suddenly that he was dizzy and sat down in a chair. She took off his hat and led him into his study, and on the way he was able to pick up a glove that had fallen. In the study he sat down again and his wife asked if she should not open his collar, but he could only give her a muffled answer. Then she noticed, to her horror, that his face was quite crooked, and he saw her looking sharply at him and asked, "Why do you look at me like that?" But he did not go to look in the mirror, as he normally would have done, to see if there was *something wrong.* His speech was already laboured. She made him lie down on the sofa and he gradually lost consciousness.

In the meantime the funeral was taking its course. Raimund said that even as he hurried to the funeral he was sure he would never see his father alive again. Both he and his mother think it better that he never recovered consciousness, only to live through a long and incurable illness. Gerty only grieves that Hugo never received the letter from Richard Strauss to confirm the arrival of the altered first act of *Arabella*, and expressing Strauss' pleasure at the success of the revision.

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Hofmannsthal was the last of the great baroque poets, of whose clan the finest members were Shakespeare and Cervantes. Baroque—the art of real feeling consciously attached to an unreal object. How ceremoniously Hofmannsthal handled his themes: he officiated, as it were, like a priest with the Host and attached to the ceremoniousness a magical meaning, particularly in his prose. To grasp at anything directly was contrary to his nature, impossible; it seemed to him disrespectful and uncreative. Hofmannsthal sought objects to hang his feelings on, and he did not find them in reality. So he created objects, or, artificially sought them in art and literature. That is *echt Barock*.

Weimar, 23 July, 1929

JULIEN GREEN and his friend (a M. de St-Jean) had a meal with me. They have been here a week and intend to stay longer since they like Weimar so much. Green is powerful, almost like a peasant in looks, in his late twenties, with a calm, pleasant and well-balanced nature. I imagine the young Flaubert must have looked like him. It was noticeable how offhand he was when speaking of American literature in general (of Sherwood Anderson in particular). He studied three years at the University of Virginia, which had been founded by Thomas Jefferson, but he is, clearly, completely French.

Hamburg, 19 August, 1929

DIAGHILEV's death announced in the newspapers. Deeply upset; a piece of my world has died with him.

Berlin, 30 August, 1929

ERICH MARIA REMARQUE came to see me, sent by Hutchinson (the publishers) to discuss his contract. The head of a Saxon peasant boy, hard lines and furrows, blond with blue eyes and blond eyebrows. A firm expression that sometimes slips into lyricism. He told me, in detail and almost without pausing, his development from an unhappy childhood in which nobody in Osnabrück gave him advice or guidance. It always seemed extraordinary to him that he existed at all. As he came home from the War his mother had just died, and when he saw her lying in the hospital he could not recognise her. During the War they had all thought: when peace comes everything will right itself. But they found themselves just as helpless. He had had no idea what he wanted to do. For a time he worked for Continental-Rubber, writing advertising copy and jingles. Then he went as a sports reporter to a Berlin newspaper and dreamed of getting into the highbrow literary pages. He started to write *Im Westen nichts Neues* as a literary exercise; it was finished in six weeks, went easily, without any trouble. "Writing altogether was easy, as soon as one had a grip on the material.... Travelling in a train between somewhere and somewhere one saw sometimes towards evening a single man crossing a lonely field. Against the sky he looked immensely tall. That's how it was! One had to put one's people against the sky and build up the background behind them; and then without elaboration or pathos they would be great...." That was what he tried to do: to put his persons against the infinite, and once that had been grasped writing was really quite easy. Perhaps the sentences did not turn out as polished as they would from a professional literary man, but they went more to the heart.

Arnold Zweig had called him "slapdash," but Zweig's art came between the book and its reader, and Remarque wanted to get close to the reader; that was enough for him even if his style was not so cultivated as Zweig's. The success of *All Quiet* had been depressing rather than exciting. Before that he had believed that success must be satisfying; but then he knew that success was nothing; it could never fill a man altogether. He had never been so near suicide as in the first few months after his book came out, and the only thing that helped him then was the thought that perhaps the book had been of some use. That was all that mattered. To serve a cause: of peace, or of one human being who was helped; that was the only thing of value. He would like to do something later, for those who were lonely in the world, who had lost their way—perhaps a home where young writers could work and live without having to worry. He had no idea, he said, whether *All Quiet* was a good book or not. For him it had simply been a five-finger exercise.

In the evening I met Arnold Zweig at dinner, where he cunningly distilled poison against Remarque. As if somebody had attacked Remarque, though everyone was praising him, he said condescendingly: "No, no, the book is good. Remarque, like Renn, is a good amateur novelist. He might even have made a great novel of *All Quiet*. But that was *why* he was an amateur—he had not recognised the point from which a great novel could have arisen, although he had found that point, and

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passed it blindly by. At the point where the farm boy saw the trees in blossom and couldn't stand the War any more—that was where I would have started the story and massed everything about this young peasant boy. Then it would have been a great novel...." In general, Zweig made an effort to be maliciously witty the whole evening, but since he only had ill-will and no humour the whole conversation was the last word in dreary literary chat.

Paris, 3-4 October, 1929

I WAS SITTING in the barber's chair when I heard the news of Stresemann's death, and sat there as if on hot coals. The official announcement was in *Paris Midi*: he died yesterday of a heart attack. It is an irreparable loss the results of which cannot be imagined. I saw the Counsellor at our Embassy later and he said the effect of Stresemann's death here was of consternation, and a feeling of dread as to what was to come next. I am afraid the chief consequence of Stresemann's death will be internal political difficulties in Germany; the Nationalists will move further to the right and the coalition may break up and thus make efforts to establish a dictatorship easier.

It is almost as if a great French statesman had died, the grief is so general and sincere. One feels that Europe is almost one nation already. The French seem to think of Stresemann as a kind of European Bismarck. It strikes one forcibly that since the War almost all the men who have achieved world fame have been German—Einstein, Eckener, Koehl, Remarque, Stresemann; the only others who have reached such stature are perhaps Lindbergh, Lenin, and Proust.

London, 14 November, 1929

IN THE AFTERNOON I went first to tea with Leonard and Virginia Woolf in Tavistock Square. Leonard spoke very warmly of my book and said his review of it would be in the next day's *Nation*. Virginia said, "You know, you have been spoiling my sleep this last week, by my husband insisting on reading to me passages of your book." We then spoke in detail of Rathenau and Stresemann. Afterwards I went to see Bernard Shaw who does not live in Adelphi Terrace any more, but in Whitehall Court. Very luxurious and with a marvellous view of the Thames. His wife was very pleasant and easy-going as always; she has put on a little weight, but he is still as slim and quick-moving as a stripling (although he has gone quite white). He talked in the liveliest fashion of past and present things. We reminisced over our campaign together for good will between England and Germany before the War and of the luncheon with Prince Lichnowsky when Shaw had tried in vain to warn him (the then German Ambassador) against Grey. Then he spoke of himself and Richard Strauss being at Brioni together this summer—"The astonishing thing was, that as long as Strauss and I were alone in Brioni nobody seemed to take any notice of us. But when Gene Tunney came and joined us, we could not get away from the photographers. They were always around, following us and watching us...." He told a story about T. E. Lawrence, who is an intimate friend of the Shaws, and his eccentric dislike of publicity. When Lawrence complained that his every move was followed by the press, Shaw said to him: "Well, of course they notice you. You always hide just in the middle of the limelight."

Berlin, 13 February, 1930

AT DINNER Emil Jannings said the live theatre was condemned to death, talking films would kill it. When one could see the best singers and actors in the world for a few shillings in the cinema, one would not go to some provincial theatre to see the same play with mediocre actors.

Berlin, 12 March, 1930

AT LUNCHEON at the French Embassy among a brilliant company the dressmaker, Chanel. Old Count Hutten-Czapski asked me afterwards who his neighbour had been at table and I said "a seamstress" which made him almost fall over with indignation until I added "a seamstress who paid 17 million francs in income tax last year." He was at once mollified and said "Oh, well, then...." I found her especially interesting because she was a friend of Diaghilev's. She was there in Venice when he died and said he died in peace, and happy; not reckoning on his true condition, he had been making plans of all kinds right up to the end.

Paris, 10 April, 1930

TEA at the Etienne de Beaumonts who showed me their house in the Fauboug St. Germain, designed by Brongniart, the architect of Versailles. The main salon of positively gigantic proportions, entirely in the richest style of Louis XIV, all white and gold. They have a number of

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pictures, pastels and drawings of Picasso's which do not go terribly well in the Louis XIV atmosphere, but at any rate look better in it than modern *Kitsch* would. I said I had been trying in vain to reach Picasso and they said they had not seen him for a year, though they were his friends. If they invited him he accepted but called off ten minutes before they were to sit down to dinner—the children had scarlet fever, or his wife was *indisposée*, and the like. As a matter of principle he never answered letters and if one telephoned he pretended not to be there. It was the same with all his friends. Nobody knows what he is really up to.

Berlin, 12–15 July, 1930

MAILLOL went with me to see the Pergamon Museum which is not yet open to the public. The effect on Maillol of the newly-reconstructed antique architecture was tremendous and he said he could never have returned to Paris without having seen it. He was particularly impressed by the Milet Gate and the altar frieze (which of course he knew from photographs and copies) and was fascinated by the fragments of the Telephos frieze with its lyrically and poetically conceived feminine figures.... The next morning we went to see the School for Physical Culture in the Grunewald. The magnificent surroundings in glorious sunshine and the almost naked young people who performed all kinds of athletics made, in the brilliant light and the stimulating air, a really Greek impression. It really is true as someone said at lunch that we (especially in Germany) have turned towards the Greeks in many ways but nowadays, in contrast to the classicists, quite unconsciously and naturally as part of real life. Nudity, light, sunshine, the adoration of living, bodily completeness and sensuousness without false shame or prudery. It is really astounding how the bodies, the physical vitality of young people have obeyed this drive, and how much more beautiful young people are now than they were before the War. It is a blossoming of the whole body of the people since human beings lost their shame of being naked. Maillol asked me to photograph two young people who were, as he said, "*beaux comme les dieux antiques.*" After lunch we went out to the beach at the Wannsee, and Maillol had the sudden urge to begin drawing for here were human bodies which had even more to say to him than those at the Grunewald school; those had been too much made to one pattern, similar to each other and academic. Unusual for us, neither Maillol nor any of us had paper and pencil. The next day at a big luncheon in Maillol's honour, I pointed out Albert Einstein as he came in and Maillol said "*Oui, une belle tête—c'est un poète?*" I had to explain to him who Einstein was; he had obviously never heard of him.

Self-portrait

GORDON CRAIG

Kandersteg, 15 September, 1930

A BLACK DAY for Germany. The election results show that the Nazis have increased their *Reichstag* deputies tenfold. The impression abroad will be catastrophic, and the consequences in foreign policy and finance, appalling. There are now 107 Nazis, 140 Hugenberg Nationalists, and over 70 Communists; that is, about 220 radical deputies who completely reject the present German state. This means a national crisis which can only be overcome if all the forces that accept, or at least tolerate, the Republic stand together, and only then if they also find the talent to clear up the economic and financial situation during this governmental period. The German upper middle-class seems to be dying politically. The extraordinary thing, too, is that only the parties who preach a *Weltanschauung* in opposition to the parties of local interests, have gained; *i.e.*, the Catholic *Zentrum*, the Communists, and the Nazis. National Socialism is a delirium of the dying lower-middle classes and the poison of its sickness may bring Germany and Europe to ruin for decades. Nothing can save this class, but in its death throes it can bring appalling new misery to Europe.

London, 28 September, 1930

GORDON CRAIG told me about the quarrel over the correspondence of his mother (Ellen Terry) with Bernard Shaw and characterised Shaw as a "fame seeker" and "*arriviste.*" He wrote letters to every prominent actress in order to get them to act in his plays, and now these letters have become embarrassing to him.

Berlin, 10 October, 1930

MAX REINHARDT's production of von Hofmannsthal's *Schwierige* at the Komoedie, with Helene

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Thimig and Gustav Waldau. Gossip has it that I was taken as model by Waldau for the leading role, or anyway he wanted to copy me. Since he is rather fat and slow-moving, and I am thin and quick, he has not been very successful. But my companion said that he had taken off my movements, especially my hand movements, surprisingly faithfully. Since I don't know Waldau, Max Reinhardt must have coached him. And I must admit that Hofmannsthal has borrowed a good deal from me for the central figure and, also, in its relations with "Helene" which, though I never thought of it until this evening, are copied from my own relations with Helene von Nostitz. Helene Thimig (Max Reinhardt's wife) was magnificent; of a delicacy and subtlety in her acting and facial expression and a radiant purity that puts her among the greatest actresses. The play is a little uneven, the third act weak but the second with its two love scenes, wonderful, drenched in poetry and human understanding; an immortal act. Hofmannsthal had no dramatic talent but sometimes, with the ravishing power of his lyricism, as in this second act, he achieves overpowering dramatic effects.

Colin Spencer

ANDRÉ GIDE

The former Crown Prince and his wife sat in the first row of the stalls. He has gone grey, almost white, and the Crown Princess is a fat, elderly woman. But the Prince has retained all the mannerisms of his junior officer days, playing the young prince, the gay Hussar, who longed for the "gay, happy War," who stood in a window at Stenay in his pyjamas and waved to the scattered troops retiring from Verdun, and who had to take his French whores with him on campaigns. In him the inherited lack of taste of the Hohenzollern reaches almost monumental proportions.

Berlin, 13 October, 1930

THE REICHSTAG opening after the elections. Mass demonstrations by the Nazis all afternoon and evening. In the Leipzigerstrasse they smashed in the windows of the Gruenfeld and the Wertheim department stores, and in the evening had a mass meeting in the Potsdamerplatz where they shouted *"Deutschland erwachet!", "Juda verrecke!", "Heil! Heil!"* They were constantly broken up by police patrols in trucks and on horseback. The Nazis were mostly half-grown out of the *Lumpenproletariat* who ran away howling as soon as the police began to use their batons. I have never seen so many *lumpen*-proletarians in this district. The streets reminded me of the days just before the 1918 Revolution, with the same mass meetings, the same catiline figures sneaking about and demonstrating. If the government does not take the matter firmly in hand we shall slide into civil war. In any case I reckon today's riots at about a billion marks in losses on the stock exchange and withdrawal of foreign investments. That the riots were organised is proved by the fact that only shops with Jewish names were touched; those with Christian names were left alone.

Paris, 29 November, 1931

LUNCHEON at the Princess Bassiano's in Versailles, André Gide was there, among others, and appeared pleased to see me. During the conversation I mentioned the bitter poverty in Germany. Gide said he was sure there was great need among the mass of the people, but it was hard to convince the unbelieving in France because Frenchmen returning from Berlin always talked of the incredible extravagance there, and many Germans in France seemed to have money to burn. At table Gide remarked that he had never read *Zarathustra* though he had read everything else of Nietzsche's, but the style of this book was unbearable. He also said that Thomas Mann had argued with him that Goethe had never written a *Prometheus*, he only knew his *Pandora* and mixed up the one with the other. After lunch I gave Gide a lift to the Cinéma des Miracles

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where he was going to see Lilian Harvey in *Der Kongress Tanzt* at my suggestion.

Paris, 2 December, 1931

MET AN Italian, Caffi, quite fascinating. He was in Bolshevik Russia as a correspondent for the *Corriere della Sera* for four years and afterwards worked at the Italian Embassy there. He was in Cheka prisons twice, once for six weeks, with dreadful food—100 grammes of black bread a day and a stinking fish soup, brought around once a day by a heavily armed Lithuanian female who was eaten up by syphilis. Every Saturday night prisoners were shot in the basement under his cell, and it sounded like the slamming of doors. He knew the GPU-chief Dzerzhinsky and got on quite well with him, for they had been students together. He thought Dzerzhinsky was a pathological type but had integrity and was himself incapable of murdering anyone, unlike the executioner, Peters. Incidentally Peters had gone mad after a while. No Bolshevik executioner stood it for more than two years. There were some of them in every insane asylum, and the sanatoria on the Crimean coast were full of GPU men who had gone crazy.

Berlin, 23 March, 1932

I HAVE HEARD some quite extraordinary reports that leave no room for doubt that both sides, Left and Right, are making preparations for civil war. One report makes the whole thing grotesque, if it is true that Kapitän Erhardt of the Erhardt Brigade and the Kapp *Putsch* is leading and paying for *Communist* shock troops who are to be trained in Silesia this spring, under the camouflage of being "Black *Reichswehr*." That is really too absurd to be possible. The Communists expect a Hitler *Putsch* in August for which they are training their members for a workers' rising under the *Eiserne Front* (SPD) and with the *Rotfront* (KPD) allied with it.

Berlin, 8 April, 1932

MASS MEETING of the *"Eiserne Front"* for Hindenburg in the Lustgarten. It is weird to see these Red demonstrations to make Hindenburg President.

Weimar, 16 April, 1932

REPORTS reach me of a "general demobilisation." With a stroke of the pen? That the *SA* and *SS* —supposed to number 400,000—should allow themselves to be so easily disarmed looks suspicious to me.... If the action succeeds it means the largest change in our public life since the defeat of the *Spartakus* uprising in March 1919. The conduct of Hitler and his men compared with those times seems to be wretchedly cowardly, and accords well with the weak, feminine character of Hitler and those about him.

Berlin, 28 May, 1932

ANDRÉ GIDE is here and went with me to see the new housing estate out by Onkel Toms Hütte (in Grunewald); it impressed him very much, *la cité magique*. He groaned over the backwardness of the French—why had the French lost their understanding of architecture at the same time that it was coming to fruition in Germany? I said one could only understand this new form of building as part of a new way of living, just as the horrible, fiddling, ostentatious architecture of the turn-of-the-century was the exact mirror of the vulgar ideals of that time. Then we went to tea at Helene von Nostitz's because Gide wanted to meet the American journalist Knickerbocker who was there. Knickerbocker is a small, wiry, red-haired American with a crumpled but juvenile face, who at once began to interview me about my opinion of the world crisis. He is writing a book which is to decide whether this crisis is only "quantatively different" from former great economic crises or whether it has a "qualitative difference" as well. I quoted to him from some philosopher, I can't remember who, that there came a moment when quantity turned into quality, and I feared that that moment had arrived in the present crisis; that is, that the enormous dimensions of the crisis had already made it different in nature from former crises.

Berlin, 28 June, 1932

FRAU VON OSSIETZKY telephoned and said the Nazis were patrolling the whole time in front of her house in a quiet street in Friedenau. Gradually they are establishing a reign of terror in the streets of Berlin.

Berlin, 1 July, 1932

WITH François-Poncet (French Ambassador to Berlin) to dinner at the *"Haus am Wannsee."* After talking for hours of politics and politicians, Poncet said he felt that the politicians with whom he had to do always handled him

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with distrust and dislike. And he who had put his whole energy into the construction of close German-French co-operation! It had been his fate to come back to Germany since he was fourteen, over and over again. In Germany he had awakened to the life of the mind; Germany was the country that drew him more than any other. He would never have accepted the Embassy of any other country, because he felt his fate had sent him here to complete his life's work. I said, "You have more than an Embassy here, you have a mission," and this clearly gave him satisfaction. German-French co-operation, a Franco-German alliance—he said literally, "*alliance*"—must be the cornerstone of the building of a new Europe.

Berlin, 8–12 July, 1932

THIS WEEK reparations were finally buried at Lausanne. Franz von Papen gave the news himself over the radio, in a loud shabby speech, without a word of thanks for his predecessors, for Rathenau, Stresemann, or Bruening, or for Ramsay Macdonald who was the main architect of the agreement. Today, while we spent Sunday in the lovely countryside, there were again 17 dead, and nearly two hundred wounded, victims of the unbridled and organised terror of the Nazis in Berlin. Day after day, Sunday after Sunday, it is a continuous St. Bartholomew's massacre.

Weimar, 7 August, 1932

AT FRAU FOERSTER-NIETZSCHE'S who told me that the Nietzsche Archives are now "quite in the centre of politics." The new chairman is a Nazi professor who is actually considered as a possible Nazi Minister. In the archive itself everyone, from the servants to the chief, is a Nazi. Only she herself, as she says, remains *Deutschnational*.

She recounted how Hitler came to see her after the first night of Mussolini's play at the Weimar Theatre. There were several Italian newspapermen with her when he was announced, and he came in with a gigantic bunch of flowers and accompanied by his staff. In the presence of the Italians, Hitler started a lively political discussion, during which he expressed himself in what she thought to be a rather incautious fashion about an *Anschluss* with Austria. He emphasised that he did not wish this to happen, for Vienna was not a purely German city. Frau Foerster-Nietzsche thought it not quite correct of him to say that in front of foreigners. I asked her what impression Hitler made on her as a man—did she think he had stature? What she had chiefly noticed was his eyes, which were fascinating and stared right through one. He had struck her rather as a religious leader than a politician and she had not gained the impression that he was a gifted politician.

Winifred Wagner, who had called on Frau Foerster during the Goethe celebrations recently, was close to the Nazis, and in fact this whole group of German intellectuals, with its roots in the Goethean romantic period, has caught the Nazi disease, without ever knowing how. The Nietzsche Archives have had at least a material advantage from their new fascism: Mussolini sent them 20,000 lire last year. . . .One could weep to see what has become of Nietzsche's archives! Visited by Hitler and by Hermine, the "Empress," the wife of the former Kaiser: quite ludicrous when one considers what the Emperor thought of Nietzsche. When I was a boy and read Nietzsche in Potsdam with Bernhard Stolberg, he was removed by his father and sent to a priest almost as a prisoner for six months as punishment. In those days Nietzsche was a revolutionary and thought of as almost a traitor to his country.

We had our talk in the little parlour on the first floor. I could see through the connecting door the sofa where I last saw Nietzsche sitting, looking like a sick eagle. It had made a great impression on me. Mysterious, incomprehensible Germany. . . .

Cannes, 14 August, 1932

THE NEWS in the Marseilles papers is that Hindenburg refused to make Hitler Chancellor yesterday. The crucial conversation only lasted thirteen minutes. What now? Civil war or the inglorious crumbling of the Nazi movement? The only thing certain is that we are moving into darkest reaction. It would be hard to say which is the more reactionary, Schleicher or the Nazis.

Paris, 26 August, 1932

GERMAN POLITICS are the centre of interest in the French press: columns every day about Hitler, von Papen, Schleicher. The average Frenchman is better informed about German politics than about his own. The French clearly have the feeling that a volcano is erupting in their immediate vicinity which may at any moment turn their fields and towns into a wilderness, and whose smallest movement they watch with

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astonishment and fear; a force of nature against which they are helpless. Germany is (alas!), once more the "international star," and holds the attention of the French masses as it did in the War, fascinating them in every paper, every cinema, with a mixture of awe, lack of comprehension, unwilling admiration, and a certain amount of *Schadenfreude* at the trouble we are in. We are the huge, tragic, sinister, dangerous adventurers who have played even the Russians off the world stage. Something like the role played by the French in the eyes of foreigners during the Dreyfus affair. Dubious details such as *le nudisme*, the night clubs where boys take the place of girls as dance hostesses, the corruption of moral values among the youth, play their part in the almost pathological interest taken in Germany. They feel the coming of a new world that could bring even more immediate danger to France than the Bolsheviks, and they hope vaguely that it will die before it is born. German films like *Maedchen in Uniform* and *Emil und die Detektive* run for weeks to full houses.

Berlin, 1 September, 1932

DINNER WITH the American copper-king Guggenheim. Wanda von der Marwitz, whom I last saw thirty years ago, said with delight that all her relations were Nazis. She herself remained a monarchist, but *Deutschnational* and of course anti-Semitic. I was that too, of course? I said No—otherwise I should not be there that evening as the guest of Jews. She is so dotty that she did not even feel the thrust; she went gushing calmly on. Baroness Rebay, who lived in Strasbourg until 1918 and still feels herself to be an Alsatian, is a Nazi sympathiser too (though she complains that they have closed the *Bauhaus* at Dessau). According to her, the wonderful thing about "the Movement" is that it is teaching the ordinary people that they too must make sacrifices, whereas during the War it was only "our kind" who made sacrifices. I said: all the same several million common people had been killed in the War and several hundred thousand had died of starvation; none of my own acquaintances had starved....

Mrs. Guggenheim, who is said to have an extremely fine collection of Primitives and modern abstract paintings, told me that she loved both kinds of painting "though one could naturally not compare the two, since the Primitives were so much more expensive."

Berlin, 7 November, 1932

TO A LECTURE by Drieu La Rochelle, along the lines of his book *L'Europe contre les Patries*, François-Poncet, was sharply hostile. As for Roger Martin du Gard, he is intoxicated with Berlin, which he is visiting for the first time. The most fascinating thing is the life of the street, *la rue de Berlin*; the people he sees there are quite different from the people of Paris: they have the future in their eyes. The new man, the man of the future, is being created in Germany. The Russians are too far away from Europe; England, France, and America lack idealism, the inner drive necessary to a new creation. It was in Germany that the human being would arise who should combine past and present, and form the synthesis between individualism and socialism. He said he was refusing all social engagements while he was here and living in the streets, especially in the working-class quarters of the North and East. André Gide, who was also present and is a close friend of Martin du Gard's, is dominated too by his interest in Germany after a period when he had turned towards England; now he looked only towards the East—Germany and beyond to Russia. But, said du Gard, Gide was mistaken about Russia; it was Germany that was the country of the future. He is much impressed with the beauty of the German race; the handsome young boys and girls; they were a reincarnation of Greece....

Berlin, 18 November, 1932

VON PAPEN resigned yesterday with his whole cabinet. At last! This eternally smiling, frivolous amateur has done more harm in the last six months than any Chancellor before him. The worst of it is he has irreparably ruined Hindenburg's prestige.

Berlin, 2 December, 1932

HINDENBURG has entrusted Schleicher with the formation of a government, so the spectre of Papen's return is at last banished. He has been vomited out by the nausea of the people, much to the distress of old Hindenburg.

Berlin, 28 January, 1933

SCHLEICHER has fallen and Papen is to form a new government. It is now perfectly obvious that he is playing on his favour in Hindenburg's eyes, for he has nothing else behind him and almost the entire people against him. It makes me positively sick to think that this muttonhead, this gambler, is to rule us again. Most suspicious is the background to the affair that

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has produced a quite unnecessary change of Chancellors: the scandal of agricultural credits to the eastern landowners, the enormous swindles in the estates east of the Elbe which were just about to be discovered. The whole thing is a mixture of corruption, intrigue, and court favouritism out of the worst era of the absolute monarchy. The next thing will be that *this* cabinet is overturned by Papen, or Hitler, or Schacht, and it will bring down the President with it.

Berlin, 30 January, 1933

WHEN my luncheon guest arrived he brought with him the news that Hitler has been appointed Chancellor. I was astounded. I had not expected this turn of events, and certainly not so quickly. Downstairs in the lodge, our Nazi *portier* broke out at once in loud celebrations.

In the evening, I was General von Seeckt's guest at a dinner and lecture at which Count Coudenhove-Kalergi developed his ideas of "Germany's European Mission." But I don't care for the idea of a "Pan-Europeanism" turned against Soviet Russia; it plays into the hands of the imperialists and the propagandists of a war of destruction against Russia. Coudenhove said quite definitely that Churchill and Amery share his ideas.

Berlin is in a real carnival mood tonight, with *SA* and *SS* troops marching through the streets and crowds on all the pavements staring at the goose-stepping parade.

The carnival reached its climax when five of us went to a *Bierhaus* after the lecture with S. to have a drink. Two blonde whores came over and sat down with us and accepted an invitation to have a beer, and we spent the rest of the evening until two o'clock with these two little things. I thought at first that the pair were acquaintances of S.'s, but then I saw this was not the case for he became more and more embarrassed while the two little ladies made no effort to go and ate and drank everything offered to them. They addressed him affectionately as *"Du"* and called him "Grand-daddy." A worthy and appropriate end to this historic day.

Berlin, 27 February, 1933

I WAS DINING at Lauer's on the Kurfuerstendamm when, at about ten o'clock, old Lauer himself came up to us and said he had just heard that the *Reichstag* was burning. So the planned assassination has taken place: not, as we supposed, on Hitler, but on the *Reichstag*. What the consequences will be nobody can predict.

Frankfurt, 8 March, 1933

IN THE AFTERNOON I left for Paris.

George Grosz

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Colin MacInnes

Old Youth and Young

THE YOUNG have two ways of defeating the old, and replacing them in power. One is to adopt, at an early age, the protective colouring of elderly social *mores*, and outwit the old by pretending to be like them. The other is to confront their elders, and rebel.

The first method is the more traditional, and perhaps eternal. We all know the boys and girls of whatever class who, despite the glint of conquest in their eyes, display all the gravity, while still minors, of elder statesmen or matrons. Of course their seniors, perceiving this glint and perhaps remembering their own youth, will in their turn deceive the young, and keep them at bay for as long as possible. Yet these outwardly respectful infants know they will triumph soon, and often do so at a sensationally early age: William Pitt the Younger is a perfect example.

What of the young rebels? Do they present a more serious threat? Have they ever really conquered their elders by changing policy, altering events when still less than thirty? To try to find out if they have, let us compare the impact of the young in the 1930s, and the present time.

These periods are comparable because they are both decades of social and international crisis in which the young have been active and vociferous. The 1940s were a time of war and reconstruction, in which the tasks of the young were less determined by their own ideas than by the huge pressure of events. In the 1950s, clamant young voices were heard again, but not until the 1960s did an international movement of the young (even if in contrary directions) become apparent, and this in conditions of tension comparable to those of thirty years ago.

AMONG THE YOUNG of today, the youth of the 1930s has a very bad press indeed. Roughly, the argument goes thus. The young of thirty years ago never really assaulted their elders (almost all of whom were proved by history to have been entirely wrong), were too much involved in political movements they never understood and which blatantly exploited them, and were given to "romantic" gestures (such as fighting in Spain) which were self-indulgent and ineffective. Whereas now, *we*.... But before we see if the youth of today are doing better, let us examine their charges against our younger selves.

To do so, for anyone who was not alive then, needs a considerable effort of historical imagination, for conditions were enormously different from those of the present day. This is not to make excuses for the young of the 1930s, but to remind ourselves that possible action in any circumstances is always determined by them.

In the 1930s, there was no "youth" in the modern sense. By this I mean that while there were, of course, just as many young men and women (or proportionately as many), they had none of the economic status of the young today —a chief factor, I believe, that enables the present young to express themselves, if they wish to, in the political and social fields. Thus, I cannot recall *anybody* I knew in that period, of my own age, who lived, economically, more than a marginal existence.

Social conditions, especially in the early '30s, were grim. The economic troubles besetting England today bear no comparison to those of the 1930s, when there were millions of unemployed, and starvation (called "under-nourishment") was apparent everywhere. Every night, you could see hundreds of men sleeping out on Thames embankment, and voluntary soup kitchens, however much they smacked of Lady Bountiful, kept people just alive.

Fascism was a reality in England—not just a foreign threat. I find it hard to persuade any-

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one young today (on the rare occasions when they're interested) that Mosleyite meetings at Olympia were indistinguishable from those in Nazi Germany, and that whole bus and tube-loads of blackshirts invaded the East End like armies. Nor was official sympathy—especially among the police—on the side of those who were attacked.

We had a government, and a Press, that were largely on the side of foreign Fascism. Of course, they did not want it here, for that would have meant that Fascists, not themselves, would have controlled government and newspapers. But with honourable exceptions, the whole official tone was anti-democratic and, for that matter, anti-Semitic. A splendid whitewashing job has been done over the years to suggest this wasn't so—thus Tories conveniently forget that Churchill, now a Conservative hero, was loathed and mistrusted by the vast majority of the party. (I can well remember the venom of my own M.P. about him when I lobbied the nit in the House of Commons.) If anyone doubts this at all, they could spend a week at Colindale looking through Press and *Hansard* files.

Overhanging all this was an inevitable threat of war. There is indeed a threat of war today—but at least one can feel, without blind optimism, that it might conceivably be avoided. In the 1930s, no such doubts were possible.

HOW DID the young of the 1930s react to this situation? In three ways, I think. The conforming majority stuck their heads in the same sand as their elders. Of the remainder, a minority hived off to the political Right, and a majority to the political Left. Before we go any further, I would like to examine three terms much used at this period—"Left and Right Wing," "Fellow Traveller," and "Intellectual."

In the 1930s, the terms "Right" and "Left" did have some reality. Essentially, if you were for socialism against capitalism, in whatever form, then you were "Left"; if not, "Right." These capsulated definitions left out vital factions—chiefly, your attitude to the *form* in which either economic system was enforced, and to what extent you accepted nationalism: both of which turned out, when war came, to be equally important. When it did, all belligerent nations, without exception, and whether capitalist or socialist, beat the nationalist drum, and had to, to survive. Nor were capitalist nations the least reluctant to accept state controls over social and economic life.

Today, I think the terms "Left" and "Right" are strictly meaningless: are, indeed, used only by old-fashioned polemicists as mindless terms of abuse for anyone who doesn't agree with them about anything. Thus, which is de Gaulle? "Right," because he is a general (albeit still a brigadier), a practising Catholic, and a patriot? But didn't he clobber the Army, has he persecuted heretical faiths, and who on earth *isn't* a patriot of one kind or another? And isn't the "public sector" of the French economy larger than elsewhere in Western Europe, and increasing? If one applies these terms "Left" and "Right" to any political figure of world significance today, one finds they crumble in one's hands and one has to think all over again.

Then what of "Fellow Traveller"? What is noticeable about this term is that it is always applied to those who, for whatever reason, support any attitude held by a Communist power, and never to those who support any action hostile to this power. Thus, if one thinks the Russians are right about the Viet Nam war, and the Americans wrong, one is a "fellow traveller"; whereas if one thinks the contrary, one is somehow not. I agree that the term could legitimately be used of anyone who fully accepts all Communist dogma yet who, by political virginity or for occult reasons, doesn't want to say so openly. But when it is applied, as it usually is, to someone who agrees with Communists about some things, though he may utterly disagree with them about others more important, the term becomes one of thoughtless vituperation.

"Intellectual": how many stalwart (or sometimes hysterical) men, from Rudyard Kipling onward, have despised him! "The brittle intellectual who cracks beneath the strain," the poet said. Well—does he crack? For if one examines the record of Continental European intellectuals, during the period of maximum pressure and danger under occupation during World War II, one finds that it is one of outstanding courage and practical intelligence. Critics of intellectuals simply cannot understand that a man can analyse his thoughts *and* act on this analysis. (They should study the life of Socrates, perhaps.)

LET US RETURN, THEN, to the young of the 1930s, and first consider those who swung over to the "Right." While profoundly disagreeing with these, it was at least possible to enter into a dia-

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logue with them: they, at any rate, realised we lived in a moment of international and social crisis, and that alternatives existed. Thus, one could feel infinitely more respect for Roy Campbell, a militant supporter of General Franco, than one could for the multitude of trimmers who regarded the war in Spain, soon to erupt all over Europe, as a mere Latin aberration.

What of those who turned towards the "Left"? Here the key problem was their attitude towards Communism and the Soviet Union. I think one is entitled to be impatient, even contemptuous, about those who condemn anyone who, in the 1930s, either became a Communist, or worked with them: contempt for those like agents of M.I.5 or the F.B.I., or eminent English and American publicists and politicians, who probe into a man's past to find reasons to denounce him for making a choice that was dictated by pressures of which they have no conception. Or have they none, really? Are those who "yielded" to the blandishments of Communism more to be despised than those who climbed eagerly on to Senator McCarthy's bandwagon? Let us rather try to imagine the state of mind of someone who saw all the dangers of the 1930s and felt, unlike the ostriches around him, that he should try to do something about them. Let us try to see the situation not as it may appear now, but as it did, say, in 1936.

There could be no doubt that Fascism was the chief menace. This is something everyone later came to see, for if not, why did the Allied powers, when Russia eventually entered the war, immediately side with her against the Germans? And back in the 1930s—before 1939, that is—the only power, and the only party, effectively opposing Fascism were Russia and the Communists.

The next inducement was that, since the last century, millions of human beings, not necessarily beguiled by propaganda, have come to believe that socialism is a less destructive form of social and economic organisation than capitalism. And Russia, whatever may be said about its methods (which as even Khrushchev has admitted, is a hell of a lot), had at least got rid of that. This seemed to many one unassailable reality among all those that contradicted the value of the achievement.

Impelled by these two reasons, many took the plunge and became Communists. And for England, I would add a further minor reason, but not one insignificant. The English Communist Party, unlike those in countries where Communism has triumphed, or won a mass following, was small and relatively powerless, and its members have thus acquired few—or less—of the characteristics that make Communist rulers often so repellent. Enticed to join "the Party" a young English man or woman would not find themselves confronted, in the person of the beckoning Party member, with a bureaucratic monster, but with someone still not bereft of the nicer characteristics of a human being. One may well imagine that if Communism triumphed here, such comrades would disappear rapidly enough. But in the 1930s there were still many of them around.

AND WHAT OF THOSE who, like myself, rejected the siren song? Communist contempt for us is total, since we are those who half saw the Way and the Life and failed to follow it. Contempt of the "Right" is equal, for we agreed with the Communists about Hitler and unemployment, and were thus "fellow travellers." Nor can it be denied that, in the cases of many of us, elements of maidenly timidity—let alone incorrigible bourgeois vacillation—played their part. But there were also reasons.

To illustrate what these were, I would relate a short, and I hope relevant, anecdote. Some of us who were painters were working all night to prepare banners for a monster demo. in the streets. The idea was to take Goya etchings of the *Disasters of War*, square them up, and reproduce them in colours on gigantic sheets that would be held above the heads of the manifesting multitudes. I had chosen the one in which a sexy girl is igniting a large phallic cannon directed against the Napoleonic hordes. After several hours' work, a delegate of the Party arrived and eyed our labours with approval, until he came to mine. His revulsion was not aesthetic (though it well might have been), but political. "Quite wrong," he told me severely. "That picture *glorifies* war: our object is to show its *disasters*."

This ludicrous incident was my moment of truth. I had been impressed, personally and even ideologically, by the comrades. But here they were, in a sphere that artists are supposed to know about (I don't mean myself, but Goya), laying down the "line." At once all the arguments against the Party came into focus: the dogmatism, the intellectual chicanery, the ends

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that justify means, the calculated horrors that were to make of Russia a great military and industrial power at the cost—even before the war began—of millions of lives and even more millions of bent brains.

I am consoled in this decision, and in believing it right (if not, I hope, "Right"), by reflecting that others of the "Left" in England whom no one could accuse of being stupid or poltroons, were also repelled by the Party, however much they loathed and despised its enemies of the "Right." Also by remembering that, in occupied Europe, many brave men who must have felt the Party was a prime mover in the Resistance, would work with it, but not join it. Also by noticing that even in Communist countries, the Party is still a minute minority. Of course, one might assume this is because the Party will only accept those worthy of it. But one can also suppose that many in Communist nations who love their country would have nothing to do with the Party that has won its way—or sometimes forced its way with foreign tanks—to power.

To many Russians it may seem hypocrisy to add what I nevertheless will, which is that the debt of all of us to Russia must be lasting. World War II was won by Russian soldiers in Russia, and by American sailors and airmen in the Pacific: all other battles, however much we in England try to make of them, were entirely subsidiary to these. Do those who do not share this essential gratitude to Russian and American troops pause to imagine what Europe would have been like under the German "thousand years," or Asia under the Japanese "co-prosperity sphere"?

One thought remains before we come to the youth of the 1960s. Just as one may feel impatient with those who condemn "fellow travellers" of the 1930s without having lived their experience, so one must with ex-Communists who never seem to beat their breasts, but pat themselves heartily on the back in self-congratulation. "We twice saw the right thing to do," they tell us. "First to go in—then to come out again. Those who do not know both worlds —of out and inside the Party—will never understand the modern world itself. The guides of the future are ex-Communists."

Are they? In purely human terms I have more sympathy with those who, despite all hair-raising evidence of Communist misdeeds supplied even by the Russian Party, have remained faithful to an ideal, however tarnished, by remaining English Party members. About militant ex-Communists there seems to be an arrogance and blindness comparable to that of the priest who, renouncing his vows and espousing the woman of his heart, lets fly at the towers of the Vatican. From their sojourn in the Party, the revelation has gone, but the deviousness and self-righteousness remain. If they've changed their minds—or faith—okay; but surely they'd do better to keep quiet for ten years or so, or talk about something else, or perhaps show signs if not of repentance, modesty.

THE TWO CHIEF FACTORS determining the political and social conduct of the young in the 1960s are their affluence, as has been suggested, and the atom bomb. A subsidiary factor, so far as Europeans go, is the sharp decline of global European power since the 1930s.

Let me consider this last first. In the 1930s, it was not altogether fanciful to believe, if you were a young European, that what you did, or didn't do, might affect events. European governments were far more powerful then, and by bringing internal pressure to bear upon them, you might hope to make political changes that could eventually alter millions of lives in other lands. For example, though the conduct of Labour governments is so different from their slogans when in opposition, one may imagine that Major Attlee, if elected, might have kept some of the promises he made on the battlefield of Republican Spain about ending the farce of "Non-Intervention." Even in the individual sphere, the thought is not ridiculous that if ten times as many young Europeans fought there as did so, at least some battles that were lost might have been won.

But no one young in Europe thinks that now, or hardly so. It is true many young French conscripts took an admirable "anti-patriotic" line in Algeria—thereby helping to salvage their country's honour, and predict the conclusion to which de Gaulle, and most of the French nation apart from lunatic generals and politicians, would at last painfully come. Yet what inhibits the young today is the feeling that nobody much overseas is going to listen to what Harold Wilson has to say—or even President de Gaulle: for the key decisions are made in Washington, Moscow, and Peking. All the same, I think the young today are less than generous—or intelligent—when they speak contemptuously

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of those who, in the 1930s, went "romantically" to fight in Spain. An army is never "romantic," nor is to die, as so many did.

The attitude of the young towards the atom bomb, with which I entirely sympathise, is, "You old people made it, dropped it, and now that you've had most of your lives and we're just beginning ours, you threaten to drop it again." If youth were not "rebellious" in face of this horrible reality, it would be surprising. All the same one can see that, here again, this problem is so vast as to inhibit action. If a civil war breaks out in Spain, you can go there or not, "romantically" or otherwise. If five nations, with more to come, have atomic arsenals guarded by such hordes of secret policemen as the world has never seen before, what do you do, or not do, about that?

Of the political activities of the young, we may first notice that though, of course, young men and women do still join political parties, this is no longer the chief focus of their action, as it was thirty years ago. In the Western world, it has so far taken four main forms—often interlocking. First, protests in various ways about the atom bomb and/or the Viet Nam war. Second, protests against racialism, to a small extent in Europe, more effectively—or militantly—in the U.S.A. Third, withdrawals, or "droppings out" into private beat or psychedelic worlds of negative protest that do have slight political overtones. And fourth, participation in government-sponsored bodies like the Peace Corps. Let us examine these, and see if they seem more, or less, effective than the activities of the 1930s already described.

So FAR AS PROTESTS about the atom bomb go, these seem to me to have had no effect whatever. I am not being sarcastic about this, or denigrating youthful efforts to convince their fellow-countrymen of how perilous the possession of these weapons is to *everyone* in the world—"defenders" as much as "attackers." Yet clearly, unless a vast majority of all ages in each of the five countries that at present possess atomic weapons, would unbelievably turn against their governments and make them throw the damn things into the sea, they will one day almost certainly be used. Yet despite all youthful propaganda, the general cry, not only in the West but in the two Communist countries that possess bombs, is, "More, more, more! Give us the 'security' that will ensure our own destruction."

On the Viet Nam war, the protest has been slightly more effective. I think the time has at last arrived when one can say, without being dubbed "anti-American," that this war is, to say the least of it, a colossal error—for opinions and evidence of this come pouring in from America itself, not just from "protesters," but from impeccably respectable sources. Leaving out all questions of morality (though these are, of course, the chief ones), it is clear from all past experience, both American and of those who have also tried to suppress militant non-European nationalisms, that this war can only be "won" by escalating it into a world war (which nobody will "win") or by, perhaps, quintupling at least the present American forces and staying in Viet Nam for several decades. The young in America, realising this as skilled strategists do not, have made a slight dent in governmental complacency.

The participation of the American young in the attack on racialism has shown great enterprise and courage; yet even here the effort has been misdirected. For Stokely Carmichael is right when he says, "Leave the 'Negro problem' to us, and tackle your own white problem." The Jews have learned that, when it comes to the crunch, only Jews help Jews. Likewise the Negroes: only they can fight their battle. The white battle in this sphere is against white racialists. Hard and dangerous though it may be to join forces with Negroes on the wrong side of the tracks in a Southern city, the real area of white endeavour is on the far side, preaching the gospel to white racialists. This is ten times as dangerous and difficult, but the only place where the battle can be won—or fought—by whites.

THE "DROP-OUT" WORLDS? It would be pleasant for me to suppose that the good word of Bakunin and Malatesta has at last penetrated to the kids, but these worlds really seem those of personal evasion. They may solve some personal problems (while creating others), but have no impact on the huge conformist majority—apart, perhaps, from providing tourist attractions for adult sightseers in California. In fact, they're no more nor less than a form of self-indulgence: no harm in that, perhaps, for adults are self-indulgent too, when they can be.... But if so, why pretend this life has some special virtue about it? It's *la Bohème* all over again in a modern context, with even less to show for it than the dreadful pictures one suspects Mimi's

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mates actually painted. What is more, while Mimi's lot probably were struggling after something, there is a strong scent of Pop and Mom or someone with loot in the background, to bail these kids out if the going gets too tough. When pseudo-religion gets mixed up with it, as in the multi-cult fantasies of Dr. Leary and his followers, the phenomenon becomes pretentious and depressing. Christ: Buddha: the Hindu sages: all their sagacity and vision, and the profound experience of their disciples over centuries, are instantly available to you and me, like, man, after a trip or two! This is really "belief" of the kind the most hypnotised evangelist would welcome in the faithful.

With the Peace Corps and suchlike, we are back in the zone of the "conforming young" mentioned at the outset. There is something in the title of any organisation—in its choice and its acceptance—that should instantly put one on one's guard. Thus, "Moral Rearmament" has always made me think immediately not of morality, but of weaponry. "Peace Corps" is doubly suspect. As we know without Orwell telling us, any governmental body talking "Peace," means the opposite; while "Corps" has an inappropriate military ring for so benevolent a body. If I were, say, an African, and anyone from this Corps arrived to instruct me, I would have two questions ready for him. "Why do you want to teach me—is there nothing your culture can learn from mine?" And then: "We have long been used to missionaries who came to instruct us, while their own nations became increasingly pagan. Have you, too, not grave social problems in America that need your attention first?"

Where modern youth seems to have done best is in the use of its new affluence. Contrary to expectation, and to the moans and groans of adults haunting bingo parlours and saloon bars, the young have used their money to bring about no less than a minor cultural explosion. About quality LPs, paperbacks, films, even theatre, they know an astonishing amount. No doubt the Beatles are not typical (and yet they are, since millions of kids buy their records), but to watch their artistic evolution over the past five years has been amazing. The lyrics are now poetry, the music embodying classical, oriental, African and electronic strains. The young have also learned how to dress, if that's a cultural achievement. They earn their keep as well. Singers, actors, models, dress designers, photographers, all in their teens and early twenties, have earned more foreign currency for Britain recently than hundreds of adult grumblers who lament their style, and earn us absolutely nothing.

YET A CYNIC would be bound to point out that on the rare occasions when youth *has* been at the prow, things haven't gone that well. In Europe, the régime in which youth came most prominently to the fore was that of Nazi Germany. In Africa today, where top posts have gone swiftly to the young, their sagacity has not seemed marked. Thus Kenya, under a man in his seventies, shows a certain stability. But what of Nigeria, where the corrupt old politicians were murdered, and the young colonels and majors took over? And can one really feel the behaviour of the Red Guards has revealed the attractive qualities of the young?

One may also wonder whether, a decade from now (if we are all still here, or some of us), the young of today will carry into their thirties and beyond the qualities we may admire in them at present. If Shaw was right in saying everyone over forty is a scoundrel, he might have added that it's equally difficult for this age group to retain, and develop, radical attitudes after families, work, possibly money, have come along to induce conformity.

One may also question how firmly a radical attitude to society among the young would stand up in a crisis. In time of revolt or war, the tribal drums beat powerfully, the ranks close, and the protesters are apt to become the most eager of conformists. Sometimes, of course, they know why they are right to be so: thus, many a "fellow traveller," much despised by Tories who were busy selling out to Hitler, was glad to take up arms against him when England at last did what the "fellow traveller" had been asking it in vain to do for years. But in other crises there may be a choice between principle and prudence: which of the young, and how many of them, would chose which?

My conclusion, therefore, to the question I posed at the beginning—are the young of the 1960s different to those of the 1930s—is that, in most ways, they are not. They are, of course, in relation to the social and political conditions in which they live; but less so essentially than might appear.

But.... At this point I abandon reason, and go by intuition—a high-falutin' name for guesswork. I think there *is* a difference, at any rate potentially. Much about the attitudes of the

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young today, however picturesque and superficially attractive, seems to consist in trying to transform, by some self-persuasive alchemy, the mere inclinations they have into sacred principles: "We like to do this or that, therefore it's *right* we do it." This isn't very convincing. But at the same time, I feel I *do* detect a principle which is novel by comparison with those held by the young thirty years ago. And curiously, although the young are chiefly denounced by their elders for their irresponsibility, I find that they hold themselves *more* personally responsible than the young used to. Not in the sense of their "duties" to the state, or even society, but to themselves. I think they examine themselves more closely, and their motives, and their own behaviour. I think they are more mature than we were.

Nor does this phenomenon—if it exists—seem confined to any nation, or to any kind of society. Wherever one travels, among whatever people of whichever form of government, one meets this kind of young man and woman: less earnest than we were, but because more self-aware, more serious. If this is true, I am encouraged. For my own apocalyptic belief is that until we all—or enough of us—learn consistently to be individuals, then governments of whatever complexion will lure us to our own, and their, destruction.

Butterfly and Man

Courtier, sly satyr falling, this gold season,
Trailing the scholar by his coat laid down,
Diverting, with slant eyes, the eye of reason,
Quaintly attentive, shuttered meadow-brown:

Gently you lean away from all he knows
While he, astonished, waits for you to play.
Behind his coat the tree of knowledge grows.
You know no history earlier than today.

Now that he rises, how can you forget
To keep your distance, both in time and space?
Between you both suspicion casts a net.
How far apart they lie, your kind, his race.

Wakened from history, roused from patterned sleep,
Dreaming those heroes still, as sleepers can,
Faces whose lineaments the leaves still keep,
Roman, Pre-Cambrian, he comes near, as man.

What can you know of him, the tall newcomer,
Trespassing on the crooked ways you go,
Alert, yet languid, in your one-eyed summer?
His threatening shadow is the thing you know.

You shift your ground: he's unconcerned with that.
Far closer to his heart lie distant things.
Twin-eyed upon the petals you lie flat;
Then one eye sees him, as you close your wings.

You quit him, turn, then settle on his book.
There, like a moment tilted on an age,
After engaging him with your first look,
You drop his shadow, like a careless page.

Vernon Watkins

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POETRY

Giuseppe Giusti

By Nigel Dennis

THE POSTHUMOUS history of Giuseppe Giusti (1809–1850) may be read clearly in the history of Italy itself. When Giusti died, Italy was still neither a nation nor a territory of one language; its linguistic divisions were as marked as its regional divisions under a diversity of rulers. Even its patriot poets, such as Giusti, could not demonstrate that the word Italy denoted a particular people or a defined nation: they were only determined that a unity which had existed in the past must live again. When Giusti pokes fun at himself in "The Ball" as the grumbler who

> *... babbles and havers*
> *About Spirit, Art, History ...*
> *All those ancient cadavers*
> *Of memorial glory*

he is simply stating the arguments that were available to the patriot who believed in the "truth" of an Italian nation: similarly, as a Tuscan, he is putting forward his own time-hallowed argot as the language of a united Italy when he speaks of himself as

> *... one grumbler who's*
> *Got it into his noddle,*
> *That for manners and grammar*
> *Home-chat is the model.*

When we read Trevelyan's *Garibaldi and The Making of Modern Italy*, we share the extraordinary excitement of those who believed that "Spirit, Art, History" were grounds enough to justify the military creation of an Italian state. But we also recognise that Trevelyan's masterpiece is as much out of tune today as Giusti's poems have proved to be. When Trevelyan was writing, men who had fought with Garibaldi were still alive, and happy to press on the historian that glory which he was so eager to record. Much of the *Risorgimento*, then, remained alive until the first decade of this century—and Giusti, to the same degree, remained alive as one of its principal satirical poets.

Since then, the history of Italy has seemed to be a huge rebuke to the romantic enthusiasm that created it. There is no need to inform the informed reader of the multiple disappointments that have distressed the Italians of this century: it is enough to say that they have little emotion to spare on the "glorious memory" of their grandfathers. What was demanded more than a century ago was obtained—to no glorious result. Today's Italian would not want to go back in time to the disunity of Giusti's day, but he might confirm despondently Shaw's famous dictum: "There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it."

As poet of the nationalism that came before the nation itself and which was disgraced at last by Fascism, Giusti is a well-known name but a forgotten poet. One would not imagine there had been a time when students knew his poems by heart and a pirate press went to the trouble and expense of printing them in shabby, inaccurate, popular versions. The strongest evidence of Giusti's absence from Italy is the omnipresence of a single poem, "Sant' Ambrogio," which the student of literature is still sure to have brought to his attention, at least at high-school level. He will be taught this one poem not because it is Giusti's best or most representative, but simply because it is the nearest Giusti ever came to the approved thinking of the present day. In it, the poet shows signs of recognising and even appreciating the unity of mankind and the universal nature of pain and ignominy: for this short moment he adapts himself to an Italy that is still trying to forget the disastrous memories of the recent past. So, it has been Giusti's fate to be immortalised by the very poem that represents him least. Of this fate one may say, at best, that it is the sort of punishment which the satirist invites when he starts loving people instead of hating them: they are quick to take advantage.

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GIUSTI'S DEMISE WAS CONFIRMED officially long ago by Croce, who dismissed him as a "*poeta prosaico*." Professor Dino Provenzal, the editor of Giusti's collected poems, says that unfortunately Giusti himself confirmed this judgment. In 1844, he says, the poet wrote: "A less agitated age is coming in now—half prose, half poetry." This, until one verifies it, is an exciting statement, because it makes one suppose that Giusti had reached the interesting conclusion that political developments were making "pure" poetry an impossibility, and a blend of semi-prose, semi-poetry, an essential form: Croce would then be reproaching the poet for dropping involuntarily a hybrid that he had conceived deliberately. In fact, none of this is to the point. Giusti's supposed agreement with Croce rests on a mis-reading of a minor poem. What the poet really said was something much *more* prosaic: in a little poem to a friend on his own thirty-fifth birthday, he confided that *he* was not feeling quite as agitated as he had been in his 'twenties and that he was going to spend half his time writing poetry and the other half writing prose. So, we may say that once again the unfortunate satirist has had to assist in his own misrepresentation. We may regret much more, however, that Croce's ruling has been accepted as authoritative by a majority of lesser professors, depriving Giusti finally of any claim to proper critical attention.

BUT THE MAIN OBSTACLE is Giusti's point of view, not Croce's. It is sure to startle us as much as it startles the democratic Italian, because it shows an attitude to personal and political liberty that we cannot share comfortably and must, instead, force ourselves to try and understand. Giusti has only one passion —the freeing of Italy from foreign rule, as the first step towards a new republic, "one and indivisible." He is a patriot, but not a liberal; he is a democrat, but not a humanitarian; he is an idealist, but not in respect to any country but Italy; he is a hater of despots, but not opposed to violence; he is usually an anti-clerical (though in the poem "The Pope, Poor Chap!" he comes out in defence of Pio Nono), but always a devout theist. He does not appear ever to have set foot outside his own country, and he envisions the world north of the Alps as a sort of "Gothic" landscape inhabited by corrupted "Germans" and Slavs, all of whom regard Italy as a slop-bucket for their own degenerates or a mere field for domination. "German & Grandduke" sums up exactly his loathing of Italian pro-consuls who worked hand-in-glove with "German" overlords; "The Snail," which has a claim to be the best satirical poem ever written about the *bourgeoisie*, shows all his contempt of the Italian who made business-as-usual his way of life and refused to respond at all to the ideal of a free Italian republic.

In short, we must read Giusti as the spokesman of what today would be called an "emergent nation"—odd as it may seem to regard the peninsula that has been our cultural cradle in the light of primitive nationalism. In this context, France is not seen as a sympathetic ally but as a source of corrupting affectation; England is not a benevolent asylum for the Italian refugee but the uncivilised creator of the gross steam-engine. Italian "purity," unmarked by any alien influence, is always the ideal—and one of the curious and humorous features of this restricted nationalism (so at odds with the broader feelings of such as Mazzini and Garibaldi) is that Giusti phrases it repeatedly in *stomachic* terms. A "Goth" or "Russki" is one who eats and swills until he vomits; an Italian playboy or traitor is always a glutton for foreign dishes. Simplicity of taste in eating is shown only by the Lombard businessman, who eats nothing but "the young growth" of the "home country"—which is to say, destroys patriotism at its very source. It is touching, but not surprising, to find that the poet's last piece of verse, written on his deathbed, concludes with a menu.

GIUSTI LIKES GIVING the impression that he is only a common or garden democrat, not at home at all with grandees and "Excellencies." In fact, like many of the Italian patriots he came of a well-connected family: his grandfather had been Prime Minister to Grandduke Leopold of Tuscany and Privy Councillor to Marie-Louise, Queen of Etruria. His father enrolled him as a law-student at Pisa University, hoping he would make the law his career; instead, Giusti only benefited enormously from the fact that Pisa was a hotbed of "Spenserian" poetry, national rebelliousness, and satirical pamphleteering. The model father found to his grief that the son who graduated at last from Pisa did so as a happy wencher, an admired feuilletonist, and a green name in the black books of the police.

The glory of these accomplishments was dulled very soon by an astonishing misfortune. The young poet undertook the care of a dying uncle, from whose death-bed in Florence he was returning one night in an exhausted state when a hydrophobic alley-cat sprang out from the darkness and savaged him ferociously. At once, the poet's life became a fearful misery: he was unable to get over the rabid infection and, as Professor Provenzal neatly puts it: "the physical infection put him into a constant state of black depression, which in turn helped to worsen the physical condition...." Giusti

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found consolation in the affection of many fellow-patriots, including Manzoni and Grossi; but one may suppose that no consolation could make up for the fact that when Charles Albert of Savoy rallied his volunteers in Piedmont, the sick poet was rejected as unfit to fight. Elected a Deputy in the Provisional Government of Tuscany, he was quickly disappointed and enraged when a triumvirate of dictators emerged as the real bosses. Declining re-election, he retired to the palace of his friend, Gino Capponi, dying there suddenly at 41. His good-hearted father, who appears to have supported his son throughout his short life, supplied the stone monument on which Capponi inscribed "the puff called an 'epigraph'" that the poet had considered suitable only for "dwarfs."

GIUSTI wrote a good many "Spenserian" love poems and many more topical, polemical poems of considerable length. But he is never more interesting and enjoyable than when he is using his great talent for pugnacious compression—reminding us, when he does so, that there is no fault more characteristic of satirists than that of over-cooking their victims. A dying fall (which Giusti dodges neatly in "Mummy As Teacher" but does not evade so well in "The Ball") occurs when hatred has run its course and has no more to say: in trying to say more, nonetheless, Giusti shares in the frailty, as he does in the vigour, of Swift and Aristophanes. But if, to boot, the reader finds him "prosaic," then there is nothing to be done but put him back on the shelf and resume the processional Croce.

The Snail (*La Chioccola, 1842*)

Here's a toast to the snail!
A health to a beast
That is brimming with merit
But extremely modest.
In matters architectural,
The spiral stair
Was inspired, certainly, by its shell;
While in matters astronomical,
To its horns we owe the telescope as well.
So, long live the snail!
A beneficial animal.

Content with the station
That God has put it in,
One could call it the Diogenes
Of the species.
It can take the air without
Crossing its threshold
And is so much at home in a shell
That it neither catches cold
Nor feels ever unwell.
So, long live the snail!
A proper Abigail.

When appetite languishes,
The bored belly craves
The savoury juices
Of outlandish dishes.
But the bonny snail
Sticks without fail
To the young growth
Of its home country,
Gnawing shoots, ruminatively.
So, long live the snail!
An abstemious animal.

Simple kindliness isn't
The way to success,
So we're forced to ape the lion,
Not the meek jackass.
But the snail has, inborn,
The urge to retract its horns;
Nettles, it never seizes;
It blows bubbles, and wheezes:
So, here's to the snail!
A pacifistical animal.

Nature, we know, is capable
Of every kind of miracle,
But (listen to this,
Executioners all!)
The snail is so favoured
That, on losing its head,
It grows a new one instead—
Yes, this sounds exaggerated,
But musn't be deprecated;
So, long live the snail!
An example to us all.

Listen now, you homely owls,
Who pour stuffy maxims
Out of fatuous skulls;
Listen, Bohemian playboys and gourmands,
Drivelling masters, lickspittle servants:
Listen, I tell you, and with
One voice raise that chorus:
Long live the snail!
An example to all of us.

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The latest in Guillotines

(*La Guigliottina A Vapore, 1833*)

China's got a machine
That goes by steam
And works a guillotine.
If a thousand form line,
In three hours it lops
Their tops.

The puffer is such a wow
That the bonzes of the nation
Say China heads civilisation.
Westerners must now
Stop putting on dog
And stand agog.

The Emperor's full of probity,
Gruff, a bit stingy, on the dry side;
But he loves the commonalty
And he has sworn to provide
Scope for the inventor
Under his sceptre.

E.g, in a certain region
Folk were looking out of sorts
About taxes and duty on imports.
His Majesty sent them the invention,
And now you won't trace
A long face.

His work's so highly regarded
That the genius has been awarded
Sole patent rights in his engine.
In addition, he has been given
A pension: he's now a mandarin
In Pekin.

I heard a priest cry: "What a wingding!
Let's get it—only needs christening."
And I heard a howl from Tiberius
To his Premier: "This is serious!
Why don't brains under *my* sway
Make headway?"

German and Grandduke

(*Tedeschi E Granduca, 1850*)

Once upon a time the word German
Didn't sound like the word Grandduke,
And when Grandduke was said by a Tuscan
He didn't think he was speaking German.

But the things that are German nowadays
Are so like a Grandduke's in their ways,
That German's good usage for Grandduke
And Grandduke's a German phrase.

So, it follows that the Grandduke's followers
(Those that follow the Germans, that is)
Must pay every respect to the German
Where the Grandduke's respect is germane.

Of the two, the German's the shorter,
Because the Grandduke stands on his shoulder,
And our money (to finish my sermon)
Supports both Grandduke and German.

The Pope, Poor Chap!

(*Il Papa, Pover'omo, 1847*)

Poor Captain Pope, poor Captain Pope!
Can't do everything, all in a twinkling;
Stuck on the poop without an inkling,
Most of the pep's gone out of the Pope.

He's only human and—same as a man—
Can't roll the world over on to its can;
Can't at once be a head that performs miracles;
Must first be a bum that hasn't barnacles.

Seas of debts on his quarter-deck,
The scuppers bunged with the century's goo,
Not enough cash to meet a cheque
And pirates abeam in a hungry slew
And asses and rogues to make his crew. . . .

Goddammit! Even St. Peter
Would have shipped water.

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Sant' Ambrogio

(1846)

Yes, Excellency, I'm in your bad books
For letting off those little squibs of mine,
And from your eminence I'm sure it looks
Anti-German of me, to be rude about swine.
But do join me now in a little research
I made when idling round Milan t'other day
And chanced to step into St. Ambrogio's church—
You know which I mean—the old one, across the way.

There was a youngster with me, the son of
That fellow with rather dangerous thoughts
Named Sandro: I refer to the one who
Wrote that little fiction about The Betrothed. . . .
Not heard of it? Didn't know it had been done?
Sorry to hear it, but I suppose that your head
Is so firmly bent upon matters political
That to switch it to fiction might prove to be fatal.

Anyway, in I go, and find soldiers there,
Hordes of 'em, from the North, no room anywhere:
The usual Bohemian and Croat soldiers
That are used as props in our vineyards here.
And how they did stand planted there!
In front of a general, you'd have thought they were:
With their tow moustaches and those mugs of theirs
And spines as stiff as wooden spears.

I pulled up short, because I was disturbed,
To tell the truth, to find myself pitched
Slap in the middle of that kind of herd—
(A feeling *you* don't have, Excellency: you're inured).
A stink hung round: there was such an atmosphere
That even (if your Excellency will excuse such words)
The candles of God's House on the great altar
Smouldered like tallow in the curdled air.

But, at the moment the priest took in hand
His consecrating of the Sacred Host,
Suddenly, from near the altar, a band
Struck up, captivating me with its notes.
Out of the mouths of the soldiers' band
A song came pouring, as from the throats
Of a people bent by hard suppression
And crying their loss of a dear possession.

It was one of Verdi's choruses:
Oh, how many hearts have known the bliss
Of hearing it raised to God by sad, parched
Lombard lips: *Oh, Lord! From our native hearths.*
And abruptly my old Adam started leaving me flat,
As if, by singing, these wooden boobies
Weren't boobies suddenly, but were in tune with me,
And me one of the gang, all of one family.

That's how things happen, Your Excellency:
Good music, written by one of us, well played—
In comes art and enforces harmony,
And out flies nonsense, bias, and rage.
But as soon as the sound stopped, my old devil
Crept in again slowly, and was gnawing my liver
When, like a trick, there came stealing
From those stolid dolls, like dormice breathing,

Slowly, slowly, a German song
Spreading its wings in the holy air;
A kind of prayer, like a lamentation,
So solemn, so plaintive, so sincere
That my heart still echoes its incantation;
And I marvel to think that such stiff dummies,
Such foreign blockheads, rigid and brainless,
Could voice so sweet a revelation.

I heard in their hymn the bitter-sweetness
Of the songs that are sung in infancy,
Taught to the heart at a loving knee
And recalled by the heart in misery.
Sad echoes of motherly tenderness,
Sad longings for love and amity:
Here was the cry of exiled man,
And my heart cried it back again.

It died away, but left me thinking
Stronger thoughts that yet were kinder:
What are these men, I stood reflecting,
But a king's slaves, banished here;
Underlings for suppressing underlings,
For smothering a Slav and Italian fear?
As sheep to winter pasture in the Maremma,
These are driven here, from Croatia and Bohemia.

Their life is hard, their discipline severe;
They are dumb, derided, and alone;
They are sharp rapacity's dull-ended spear
Pointed against others, not knowing it their own.
And the Lombard's hate of the German here
Keeps us apart from a communion:
Thus, we together bolster up a king
Who fears brothers, and reigns by dividing.

Poor fellows! Miles from where they belong,
Pitched into a world of hateful people,
Who knows but in their hearts they long
To send their Lords and masters to the Devil?
I bet they howl, like us, the same damned song. . . .
But, quick! Let me out! I'm growing so feeble,
I'll be kissing that sergeant, who, truncheon in hand,
Stands there stiff as a ladder, rampant in the land.

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Mummy as Teacher

(*La Mamma Educatrice, 1840*)

Hooray for Adelaide,
Who makes my heart drum!
And from now to eternity,
Hooray for her Mum!

Wonderful woman!
Amazing being!
One in a million!
Really something!

Sunday, I met her
Walking the piazza,
Towing abaft her
Her growing daughter.

She swooped on me affably,
Opened fire sociably,
With: "*So* delighted. . . ."
And: "*How* goes it?"

And then to Adelaide,
Standing there speechless:
"Wake up, lackadaisical!
Why so feckless?

"Get with it, noddy;
Practice your duty. . . !"
Oh, lovable Mummy,
A proper beauty!

Then, grabbing my lapel
So I shouldn't skedaddle,
Cried: "Oh, the years,
Its a dirty scandal!

"One minute you're green
And fresh as the grass,
Next minute, ancient and
Out on your arse."

("Addie! Can't you see
I've not got all day. . . ?")
"My dear sir, won't you
Come out our way?

"Poor is our station,
Rich in *heart*, however. . . .
We count this an honour,
Even a favour. . . ."

("Oh, Addie, get cracking!
Don't stand like a stick!
Oh, Holy Virgin,
What a nitwit!")

"She's still green", I said;
It's to be expected;
She shouldn't be badgered,
Shouldn't be hectored.

"Age and practice
Will liven her stumps,
And with you to kibitz
She'll turn out trumps."

At this panegyric
(Rare, I surmise),
A delicate smirk
Illumined the eyes

Of Mummy, who then,
Getting down to business,
Said: "I see that you
Grasp what's in this.

"You know our home?
You'll come?" "I'll come."
And may I ask who
Would think I'd say no?

Came the day. I went.
Mum, from a casement,
Beamed on my advent
As beam the element,

When a mumping friar
Trots up to implore 'em
To open the coffer
Maj. Dei gloriam.

With eyes glistening,
Both swooped to greet me,
Striking the ground floor
Like bolts of lightning:

Then, me in the rear,
Ascended the stair:
"*Watch* it, now!" they begged:
Watch the *legs*. . . !

"Seeing's not easy in
This murky light,
But man-traps larn you
How to look right!"

As we chatter our way,
Their teasing's fluent:
"Naughty boy!" they say;
And "Little truant!"

Mummy, once there,
Hospitably bent,
Dusts the best chair,
Fly-whisks the saint:

With two quick tweaks
In a cupboard's bowels,
At speed unfurls
A pair of towels:

From a corner pitcher
Fills up a ewer:
What a motherly nature!
What a cleanly creature!

All her little tasks
At last complete:
"What on *earth*," she asks
Is there to *eat*?

"Believe me, Addie,
I'm at my wit's end . . . ";
Then (to yours truly)
Continued: "Dear Friend!

"Hard coin in stacks is
A must to buy snacks with,
But my means to 'em wane
While my yen for 'em waxes.

"When I brood on this, I
Want to jump in the lake. . . .
Maybe *you*, lucky chappy,
Have got what it takes?"

Seeing her point in a flash,
I forked out sufficient cash
To assure Mum her ration
Of my compassion.

With a start of shock,
Almost of distaste,
Mum gave me a poke
In my bread-basket,

But nabbed the bawbees
("Just as a loan"): then,
Pursing her lips, she
Severely intoned:

"I'll only be shopping
A minute or two,
So you'll behave yourselves,
Won't you?"

To stop myself tittering,
I rose, gruffly twittering:
"Really, Madam, in all honesty,
Have some care for a man's
modesty!"

Mummy bounced outside,
Clapped-to the door,
Didn't show her hide
For an hour and more;

And only, at that,
With her usual tact;
Warning of her coming
With stomping and
humming. . . .

Oh, Mummy, if you ever knew
What man would give for more
like you!

Translated by Nigel Dennis

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THEATRE

The Outsider in the Home

By John Weightman

"GOD IS DEAD!" proclaimed Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, and the phrase has been echoed by Jean-Paul Sartre, but the ghost of God goes on haunting literature, and especially the theatre, as it has done for the last century or more. God, in other words, is felt as a positive Absence; there is a vertiginous hole in the universe where He should be, but is not, and people peer into this hole and develop various forms of hysteria. They fall into an apathetic stupor, like the young New York photographer in Jules Feiffer's *Little Murders* at the Aldwych Theatre; they drink themselves into imbecility, like the decadent Scottish baronet in James Kennaway's *Country Dance* at the Hampstead Theatre Club, or they go mad waving a feudal sword in a council house, like the young provincial schoolmaster in David Storey's *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* at the Royal Court. And if, incidentally, they enliven the domestic hearth by showing incestuous, homosexual, murderous or coprophilic tendencies, this is because, God being dead, "everything is permissible."

Much as I admire the Existentialist analysis of consciousness, I have always been doubtful about the metaphysical lyricism of "God is dead," and almost as much about the concomitant concept of revolt. "God is dead" is, strictly speaking, no more than a metaphorical way of saying that people have ceased to believe in an illusion. In this sense, "God is dead" means, quite undramatically, that God never existed and, if so, nothing has changed in the external universe. The world is as it always was, a changing set of phenomena that human beings see from a given angle and have to cope with as best they can. Nothing is any more, or any less, permissible than before. No doubt all human minds begin by looking for an absolute, but if there is no absolute to be found, it is surely immature to go on feeling indignation and resentment at its absence. It is one thing to suffer from Existentialist vertigo, which is a basic state of not-knowing from which everybody starts and to which everybody returns; it is quite a different thing to escape from this vertigo by turning it into hostility against other people or against a non-existent deity. In short, it seems to me that one or two metaphysical wires have got badly crossed in Existentialist and neo-Existentialist literature.

HOWEVER, the Theatre of Metaphysical Perplexity, hovering between the lost absolute and the all-pervading absurd, is certainly rich and fruity, since anything can be put into it. By now, it is far from being new and it has developed its own conventions. We know, for instance, that the young hero will be obsessed by objects. The only question is: which objects, and will they be symbols, non-symbols or objective correlatives? Mr. Feiffer's character specialises in artistic photographs of excrement; Mr. Kennaway's has a bag of miscellaneous belongings which he rummages through every now and again, as if to keep some hold on his identity; Mr. Storey's collects antiques and oddments, and the play begins with the crisis caused by his purchase of a complete suit of armour. If the objects include a gun (there is one in each of these three plays), we are not surprised. Chekhov, whose premonitions of the absurd are still very operative, used guns. André Breton said that to fire a gun at random into a crowd (as the characters do at the end of *Little Murders*) was the Surrealist act *par excellence*. Also, the firing of a gun does not simply mark the sudden, absurd passage from life to death, as the use of any other weapon or a physical accident might do. Genet, Sartre and other writers have frequently stressed the resemblance between a gun and a phallus. Whoever invented the gun was obviously inspired by the sexual act, which is the basic form of mysticism known to everyone, even non-believers. The firing of a gun is a poetic parody of procreation, the propulsion of a seed of death, and not of life; it is the perfect

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act of revolt, negating creation, because creation has been abandoned by, or emptied of, God.

We also know that the hero will either rant and rage, or be passive, long-suffering and given to wry reminiscence. Mr. Kennaway has the two kinds of hero facing each other, although the passive one hardly reaches the level of metaphysical awareness. Mr. Feiffer opts almost entirely for the recessive mood, while Mr. Storey reaches new heights of Osborne-like invective. And we expect the hero to be sexually deviant, because if his instinct were channelled into a moderately stable heterosexual relationship, this would confirm the fiction of "natural" processes, coherently organised by a presiding intelligence, and such an implication would never do. Therefore, Mr. Feiffer's hero only makes love when bullied into it by his girl-friend, and even then only because it helps him to sleep better, *i.e.*, to retreat even further into oblivion. Mr. Kennaway's baronet is in love with his sister and bravely risks the pox with Dundee prostitutes. Mr. Storey's young cad tortures his wife by sleeping with his mother-in-law, not through love, but perhaps just for the hell of it, to show that there are no rules.

OF THE THREE PLAYS, Mr. Feiffer's is the slickest and the least personal, being a straightforward black comedy about the commonplaces of American life, presented openly in neo-Existentialist terms and with the help of devices borrowed largely from Ionesco. A New York family, consisting of harrassed-little-man Dad, scatter-brained Mom and incipient nancy-boy Son, lives in a flat surrounded by ghastly mechanical noises, representing traffic or jets or the general pressure of industrialised society on the human nucleus. The electric light keeps going off at irregular intervals to suggest the unreliability of the outer social structure. Into this beleaguered atmosphere, the big, blonde, all-American daughter brings her latest fiancé, the excrementalist opter-out, who has given up reacting to life, apart from photographing it, *i.e.*, accepting its external appearances in the manner of the French "New Novel." The blonde, being full of naïve female energy, wants to marry the photographer to mould him into something successful. She is the predatory American woman, whose aggressive femininity can only be countered by recessive masculinity. After a rousing patriotic speech from a second generation immigrant Jewish judge, whose theme is that good Americans go on believing in God whatever frightful accidents befall them, the photographer agrees to a wedding-service, only on condition that it precisely excludes the use of the word "God." It has therefore to be performed by an Existentialist parson from Greenwich Village, later "slain during a church happening," who has the funniest speech in the play, and says all the things that are normally kept quiet at weddings.

After this, Mr. Feiffer does not seem quite sure how to go on. He eliminates the blonde through having her killed by a stray bullet from the street. The noise outside has become more violent, as if the external world were about to destroy the tawdry sanctuary of home, as in Ionesco's *Délire à deux* or *Rhinocéros*. The photographer abandons excrement and takes to blowing up snippets of old photographs which, strangely enough, he can still manage to sell in spite of the social turmoil. He is also fascinated by the patterns of dots which make up newspaper photographs; in fact, he begins to see the whole world as reducible to dots, which is another way of saying that, if God does not exist, all creation is composed of indifferent particles. The flat is visited by a paranoiac policeman who has evolved a mad theory to account for the murders which are taking place all over the city. The photographer, finally foresaking passivity, buys a gun and the family cheer themselves up by taking pot shots from the windows. Society is delirious and they are getting their own back on it by random killing.

If one takes Mr. Feiffer's play seriously—I mean seriously as a comedy—it implies that Americanised civilisation has no valid metaphysical backbone and is collapsing into indiscriminate violence. But for some reason, the work is neither as funny nor as alarming as it should be. Although there are some very good jokes, one wonders if Mr. Feiffer really believes in the confection himself or has just put it together in this way to make a fashionable theatrical piece.

OUR TWO BRITISH authors are less explicitly metaphysical and this means that their plays although perhaps more muddled, have greater human density.

According to a programme note, Mr. Kennaway's *Country Dance* had considerable difficulty in getting itself accepted by managements before it found a haven in the Hampstead barn, and one can see why. It begins as one play and then turns into another. The first act shows the tension between a Scottish scholarship boy, now a successful scientific farmer, and his wife, a bitchy, dissatisfied aristocrat, who is still involved in a complicated, half-incestuous relationship with her clever, eloquent but spineless brother. The two sophisticates cannot bear the humdrum reality of artificial insemination and mechanical milking, and so they invent practical jokes and poetic fancies to relieve the

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tedium of the Scottish Lowlands. The long-suffering husband looks on, almost as bovinely as his charges, but his passivity may conceal a form of intelligent resignation.

At first it seems that the play is about the girl, a new Madame Bovary, playing tricks and sleeping around in the vain hope of giving a meaning to life. However, after she has fornicated with the local policeman—an act which, for some mysterious reason, appears inacceptable to her brother—the latter takes over as the centre of interest, half commits suicide and declines garrulously into alcoholic dementia. Edward Fox has a splendid time with the part, which is one of those vast, flamboyant, aggressive, self-pitying monologues to which we have become accustomed in the contemporary theatre. But it is difficult to know whether we have to look upon the character as a mere example of degenerate stock, from whom the sister finally escapes in order to enjoy legitimate, mammalian bliss, or whether we are expected to be moved by him as an anguished consciousness thirsting for satisfactions higher than dairy-farming and childbearing. He is probably both, of course, but if so, the author has not quite achieved a balance between the two aspects, in spite of many telling little touches.

Mr. Storey's play is on a higher level of technical competence, and is distinguished by an absolutely superlative performance by John Sheppard in the name part, but the same kind of problem arises with it. Are we to sympathise with the silly-clever Red Brick type who bellows pretentious remarks in a rather whining voice as he becomes progressively more dotty, or are we meant to wonder at him as a pathological egotist destroying the people around him, because he cannot make sense of existence? He chafes at being married to a commonsensical wife and at having to work in a bureaucratic school, where his only outlet is the fantasy of the annual play. Although he is not an aristocrat, but a lower middle-class half-intellectual, he too, like Mr. Kennaway's hero, feels intermittent nostalgia for a supposedly more acceptable world in the past, when men wore armour and wielded swords, and personal valour was the measure of social relationships. He dreams of being a king, and his wife, in a moment of tipsiness, suggests that he might even be God. This is a curious development, also noticeable in some specifically Existentialist French works. In the absence of God's will, the human will inflates madly to fill the gap, so that a little man in a suburban villa may come to believe that he is Napoleon or Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, the non-believer turns into his own God and his brain explodes in the process.

Clearly, if the world is not to end with a series of psychological bangs before the one big bang, we need some sort of mental hygiene for a Godless universe.

Transparence

(*Notes from a Technician's Report*)

The brittle bones of the delicate birds
I trace now in the X-ray of my hand;
With the machine for stripping shoes and flesh from feet
I'd watch my big toe wiggle its sticks
On a plate of luminous blue deeper than sky;
Erosion in my roots has been revealed
By subtle beams of half-life molecules.
So now my radioactive glance
Peels the skin from love and leaves it stark:

The skeleton is fragile, like the birds';
The veins are blue and delicately branched,
But not quite visible, as blood dissolves.
The breasts do not appear, nor any part
I thought would blossom in the bones of love.

Larry Rubin

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NOTES & TOPICS

Return to Khartoum

THE GRAND HOTEL again, friendly and familiar except for the amount of traffic flowing past along the river bank. I am in an annexe, which lacks something of the fusty charm of the main building but has its advantages, such as a private bathroom—and air conditioning. With this going full tilt and the overhead fan on as well, my room is tolerable (except for the noise they make). The outside temperature at ten o'clock in the morning must be approaching 100 degrees—it was 84 as we came in to land at 7.30.

I have the slightly dazed feeling that comes of a night flight, ten hours of it including the stops. After we left Rome I slept soundly for a couple of hours and woke to see the sun climb over the edge of the desert, throwing little shadows across what at any other time of day would look like a perfectly flat expanse of sand. I peered out at the half-submerged remains of Wadi Halfa, sacrificed to Nasser's high dam; saw the Nile sweeping off on its great westward bend and coming back into sight half an hour later, after encircling an expanse of emptiness which in Western Europe would make a sizable little country; and stirred myself reluctantly to shave for what was after all a homecoming.

It is nearly forty years since I lived here as a child, in the first home of which I have any coherent recollection. When I set out now, after a bath and a change of clothes, to pay my first calls, I am amused to find myself at once in that very home, which proves now to be part of the Ministry of Information. The officials of the Ministry, when I explain this, invite me to look around. From what I remember of it very little has been changed, except that some of the larger rooms have been partitioned into smaller offices. On the verandah here I used to ride my tricycle; down there in one of those outhouses the gardener encouraged me to smoke my first cigarette; and when I climb the rickety staircase to the roof, where we used to sleep, I find it exactly as it used to be with its sheltering mud walls against one of which my bed was placed. The stars were very brilliant, I remember, and when you were lucky you could see the Southern Cross.

Encouraged by this auspicious beginning, I embark on a nostalgic tour of the city. It has changed out of all recognition, everyone tells me (and I have visited it once or twice in recent years and seen the new blocks rising and the suburbs spreading), but in essentials it seems to me to remain very much as I remember it from my childhood. It has grown, of course, and there is far more traffic—but the geniality of the Sudanese, their leisurely approach to life, moderate these changes. Even the taxis stop without hesitation as you venture (cautiously, if you are familiar with Beirut or almost any other Arab capital) on to a pedestrian crossing. And as for size, why, any city seems enormous to a child, and it happens that with all the additions there have been in forty years the principal landmarks on my memory's map are still there —all except one. The statue of Gordon on his camel, which to my childish eye was the very embodiment of romance (and it's of no consequence that I thought it was the camel rather than its rider who was called "Gordon"), is gone and that's not surprising. But the Khartoum Zoo, a couple of hundred yards along the river bank from the Grand Hotel, is as unpretentious and engaging as ever, full of queer bald-headed birds which stalk superciliously about among giant tortoises. As I watch, two of the latter engage in what appears to be an unlikely embrace, one mounting ponderously on top of the other, and I am delighted when an enterprising gazelle takes advantage of the situation and climbs on top of both to nibble the branches of a tree that would otherwise be out of its reach.

Further up the river I cross over to Omdurman by the White Nile Bridge and cannot resist telling my young Sudanese companion that I rode over it on the first tram on the day the bridge was opened. He obviously doesn't believe me (which I suppose is flattering) but smiles affably, too polite to show it. In Omdurman we visit the Mahdi's house, now a fascinating little museum full of relics of the slow duel between the Mahdi and Gordon and of the battle fought outside Omdurman when both of them were dead. There are letters and diaries recording the slow attrition of the garrison as the Mahdi's troops closed in; stumpy cannon and old flintlocks; faded flags and uniforms of both sides; and a number of prints showing Kitchener's lancers, scowling under their helmets as they ride down the dervish spearmen. As one would expect in the Sudan, there is a refreshing honesty about it all, an absence of chauvinism or of any attempt to portray either side as other than they were. This point is reinforced for me by an old man in a *galabiyeh* standing in front of one of the battle scenes. Gently and with detachment he is explaining to a child, perhaps his great-grandson, why the white and black faces in the picture confront each other with such horrid menace. Finding me a part of his audience, he carries on without embarrassment

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and throws me a smile which has more the character of a wink.

THE HISTORY OF the Sudan is as uncluttered by detail as its deserts; most of the significant past is close enough to be within the memory of someone like the old man in the museum. This thought is in my mind as I drive on past the sun-baked mud-brick walls of Omdurman and back into Khartoum, with the kites circling overhead as they did when I was a child forty years ago and as they did forty years before that, when the Mahdi's forces were tightening the noose about Gordon. The wide river hasn't changed (it looks now, in the afternoon heat, like a length of steel misted by a giant's breath) since the steamers of the relief expedition battled so slowly against its current and arrived too late, to find the Mahdi's flag flying over Gordon's palace on the river bank.

There is a government reception at the palace this evening, to which I am invited, and as I arrive at the gate where now the Republican Guards are resplendent in black and gold I am reminded that once I stood on this spot and watched Sir Alan Cobham land on the Nile in some primitive flying boat, precursor of the old Imperial Airways passenger service and remote ancestor of today's Comets and VC-10s. The fountains are playing tonight as they did when the host was a British Governor-General and not a Sudanese President; and in the background the same tall palm trees (but surely there used to be more of them?) are elegantly silhouetted against the darkening sky. There is a huge crowd of guests—with no women among them, apart from a scattering of foreign wives—and when the muezzin sounds just as the President concludes a long speech, a handsome young man leads them in prayer beside the loaded buffet tables, while we infidels, shamed by their unselfconscious piety, hover uncertainly about the lemonade and sticky cakes. It is a curious moment, in which the past and the present play tricks with each other in my tired mind. In this garden, as a child, I heard the legend of Gordon, how he died on that outside stairway, there behind the fountains, where one of the Mahdi's spearmen struck him down; and now, here beside me on the lawn, this graceful figure in white robes and turban who kneels to pray under the brightening stars, is the great-grandson of that same Mahdi and the rising star of the Sudanese Republic.

When I meet him it is in another garden, on which the stamp of England is unmistakable; one senses how some vanished British official who once lived here (or more probably his restless wife, homesick in the heat) lavished on it care and skill, trying nostalgically to recreate under the harsh Sudanese sun the damp delights of Barsetshire. To a surprising extent, the effort has been successful and in the cool of the evening, with the scents rising and what look like camellia flowers glimmering in the darkness, the garden makes an appropriate setting for this new Mahdi, one of the brightest hopes of modern Africa, who has made himself at home in the culture which his great ancestor fought so hard to exclude from the Sudan.

SAYED SADIQ EL MAHDI (who read PPE at Oxford and was Prime Minister of the Sudan at 30) is a striking figure. You see at once why the Sudanese agree that the *baraka*, the aura, of his great-grandfather has descended upon him. Tall and good-looking, with aquiline features and very intelligent eyes, he seems born to command. There is a grace, an ease, about his bearing that both suggests and inspires confidence, and behind it you are aware of a very real strength. His voice too is beguiling, and as he talks the slender hands move constantly, as though modelling in the warm air the thoughts he is expressing with great fluency—thoughts which seem to contain a highly individualistic synthesis of the Western ideas he has absorbed and the Islamic heritage to which he seeks to adapt and assimilate them. Above all, the thoughts are plainly his own and there is about them, and about his manner of presenting them, an avoidance of platitude, a sense of honest intellectual endeavour directed to practical ends.

The Sudanese, even more than most of us, have need of such directness. In eleven years of independence they have drifted, with characteristically genial unconcern, from one constitutional expedient to the next. They have avoided extremes, made few enemies, thrown up few martyrs to causes good or bad—but on the positive side there is not much to show either. Paying lip-service to the constitutional forms inherited from the colonial régime, they have in fact spent half of their independent life under an ineffectual form of military rule and most of the rest in devising compromises with which to reconcile the interests of the main contenders for power. Sayed Sadiq evidently sees it as his task to cut away the pretences and the expediency and to inject life and ambition into what is left of the democratic impulse, to find, as he says, a middle course between the kind of "feeble democracy" which has failed here and elsewhere in Africa and the accepted alternative of military, or at least autocratic, rule. The ultimate objective is to give to the Sudan the strength to play its proper role in both Arab and African affairs; and the method involves, first "the confinement of the power

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struggle to the proper representative channels"; second, a "national reconciliation," to be expressed in free, nation-wide elections; and third, the adoption of a new constitution "relevant to the character of the Sudan," with a strengthened executive and a clear division of authority between the head of state and the head of the government.

This is quite a programme for a young man who only five or six years ago was sitting his finals at Oxford and who tells you, with a hint of wistfulness, that while he always looked forward to a political career he had hoped to have another ten years or so in which to prepare himself for it. But then Sadiq el Mahdi enjoys two advantages which are not shared by any other political figure in the Sudan. As the most distinguished member of the country's leading family, he is a natural focus for traditional loyalties; and as a young man of liberal outlook, vigorous, intelligent and well-educated, he embodies the hopes of the younger generation.

The spotlight in the Sudan is very much on youth at the moment. The younger generation, in particular the students of Khartoum University, played a prominent part in the overthrow of the military régime in the autumn of 1964. Two statues in the forecourt of the University commemorate the bravery of these student leaders and there are endless reminders, in banners, posters, and pamphlets, of the need to follow their example. In the secondary schools political activity is widespread; student strikes are the fashion (adopted even by the girl students in their seclusion), and headmasters are notably reluctant to stand against so well-established a social current. From the educational point of view the results are plainly damaging, but in a wider context this tendency is evidence of a general awakening among the youth of the Sudan and of a new sense of collective responsibility. It is often ingenuous and it could be dangerous, but at the moment more than anything else it is invigorating. Of this spirit of renaissance, Sadiq el Mahdi seems both the symbol and the spearhead.

He has need of allies, for the hazards that confront him are also considerable. Even the loyalties of the younger generation are not his without a struggle, for the Communists were quick to take the credit for galvanising the students into action in 1964 and Sayed Sadiq's first objective has been to invalidate their claim. Elsewhere the peaceful revolution for which he strives can only be realised at the expense of much that is inherent in the Sudanese scheme of things, even in the Sudanese temperament. Tribal and sectarian differences (which make themselves felt inside the coalition government and even within Sayed Sadiq's own party), and a peculiarly Sudanese form of "old boy net" which finds expression in the preference for an informal system of government by consensus—these are among the more formidable enemies of his plans to rationalise and modernise the political structure. Most daunting of all is the division between the Northern and the Southern Sudanese, a division which is fundamentally racial and religious and which must be healed if Sayed Sadiq is to give reality to his programme of constitutional advance.

The "Southern question" embraces all the problems confronting the Sudanese government. For as long as the Sudan has been independent, the South has been in a state of more or less open insurrection; here the need is most obvious for a national reconciliation and for a return to constitutional rule. But under what kind of constitution? The Southerners, who are neither Arab nor Moslem, are understandably suspicious that any constitution prepared in Khartoum will subject their interests to those of the Moslem Arabs of the North—and indeed, Sayed Sadiq is emphatic that the new constitution should have an Islamic character. Here is the thorny heart of the problem, whose essence is quite simply to persuade the Southerners to trust those whom they cannot quite bring themselves to think of as their compatriots in the North. Years of repression have not helped to prepare the ground and although Sayed Sadiq, as Prime Minister, made a strong personal impression when he visited the South at the end of last year, he had been left by his predecessors a lot of leeway to make up.

Observing him, as I had the opportunity to do, over a fortnight I was amazed at the pace he set himself and at the poise with which he dominated every situation. Under such leadership, perhaps the Sudanese will even be able to carry out the task which history offers them of providing a bridge between the African and the Arab worlds. But that is to run ahead of events. For the moment the crying need is for that national reconciliation which will embrace the African South as well as the Arab North. An important first step has just been taken by the holding of a series of elections in the South, despite efforts to disrupt them, and these constitute the essential preliminary to a reconciliation. If it is to be achieved, a lot of things will have to change in the Sudan. There is much, too, that I hope will not change; for there are not many places of which you can say these days that, returning after forty years, you feel that you have come home.

Michael Adams

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London Commentary

Great Expectations

The Frustrations of an M.P. — By STANLEY HENIG

I ONCE LISTENED in Oxford to a public figure describing the quest for power of a predecessor. That man had arrived in Parliament but discovered that political power was not there. He became a Parliamentary Secretary: but still no power. At length, he reached ministerial office, and yet he was not taking the real decisions. "Where then," asked the public figure, "is power?" This same speaker now holds extremely high office himself, and I wonder if he has any clearer idea.

Actually, few of the young bloods who came into the House of Commons at the last two general elections held many illusions about the relationship of Parliament to that illusive quantity, political power. The legislature neither makes nor breaks the executive. Individual Ministerial responsibility[1] has become a meaningless notion. The doctrine of "collective responsibility" has enshrouded alike the Cabinet, other members of the Government, and even at times parliamentary private secretaries and ordinary back-benchers. Has the disillusion amongst the newcomers arisen because they once believed a constitutional theory which their experience now shows to be invalid? No, the cause of present discontents is that the Member of Parliament not only does not do a useful job of work, but he is not really expected to want to do one. Moreover, he is carefully deprived of those tools of trade which would enable him to fulfil those functions for which he is best suited. Such a state of affairs may have been satisfactory when Parliament was composed of part-timers and those who had retired from previous occupations. How can it satisfy those who have given up other, promising careers to enter the House at a younger age, and who hope to make a new career as an M.P.?

WHEN I ENTERED THE HOUSE in March 1966, I had clear-cut ideas about the relative importance of different parts of an M.P.'s work. I considered that the House should be, above all, a place where vital debates were held on vital issues. Such debates would not decide the issues, but they would help the Government to make up its mind on them and would also help in the work of public education. Secondly, Members of Parliament might give valuable specialist or lay opinions to help mould legislation. Thirdly, Parliament might expose to the public shortcomings in the governmental machine. Parliament had clearly lost the ability to put these right by its own direct action. Ministries are no longer overthrown by spontaneous vote in the House of Commons. Yet might not—via the public—effective action be induced, since there is always a general election round the corner? Finally, I placed (a long way behind) a Member's duties in regard to his constituents. Acting as a channel for the rectification of grievances was, I felt, simply being a personalised letter box or clearing house.

Such an idealised schema suited me. Like most other people who reach Parliament, I enjoy

[1] The pure theory of Ministerial responsibility suggests that a departmental Minister is responsible to Parliament for all actions by all officials of that Ministry. If Parliament is dissatisfied, it can force a resignation. There have been few Ministerial resignations since the War, and only that of Sir Thomas Dugdale (over Crichel Down) fits into this theory. Actually, he resigned because he had lost the support of his own back-benchers. There were no resignations over ground-nuts, Suez, Hola, or the Ferranti affair. Finally, over the Portland Spy case, Prime Minister Macmillan offered this startling judgment: "I am responsible; the First Lord is responsible; the Government as a whole are responsible; and that is true of every action taken by any civil servant in the whole country. . . ." In practice today, collective responsibility is the obvious shroud of individual responsibility.

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controversy and debate, I can claim some specialised knowledge of one or two subjects and can approach a few others in a more general way. On the other hand, I feel quite unsuited to be a kind of poor man's lawyer. Unfortunately, my schema does not accord with the facts. Let me consider the four parts of an M.P.'s work as I have outlined them.

FIRST OF ALL, as far as debates are concerned, successive governments have made it quite clear that they require no help, least of all from Parliament, in making up their minds. The government uses its control over the Parliamentary time-table to ensure that there are no debates until they have something to announce—almost invariably a decision. Thus Parliament did not discuss pirate radios until the government had established its policy. On occasion, the government will defend this kind of action by arguing that until there is a decision, there is insufficient interest to justify a debate. In turn, however, this is a reflection of the average M.P.'s expectation that he will have no influence in policy-making. There is a further frustration in being a back-bencher on the Government side. Frequently one is expected to sit quiet during a debate lest one provokes the other side into delaying proceedings. So there is no debate at all—just a succession of speakers from the same side, saying the same thing. I can think of no debate since the general election of 1966 which either influenced the government, or educated the public.

Secondly, the House of Commons in no sense legislates. Legislation is worked out by civil servants from Ministerial briefs. Since Ministers are not required to be experts in their subjects,[2] and civil servants are anonymous and constitutionally non-responsible, it is the Minister who ends up tightly clinging to a battered brief. Frequently, it is the Government Whips alone who ensure that bills desired by the Civil Service actually pass into law, *viz.*, "Resale Price Maintenance" and "Decimal Currency." In the latter case, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had his back to the wall in favour of the £-system chosen by Treasury officials. Now I am all in favour of experts to do experts' work, but should they not be controlled by laymen? Money is too serious a matter to be left exclusively to the financial experts.

Thirdly, regarding exposure to the public. Here there remains a role but the Member of Parliament is not alone in fulfilling it. Press and television often perform this function more valuably, and the government frequently makes its own pre-emptive move by speaking directly to the public. Thus when the Prime Minister returned from H.M.S. Tiger, constitutional nicety demanded that his first speech be to the House of Commons, but in fact he was speaking to the nation. Government and party propaganda machines are likely to be stronger than those of Parliament or its individual members.

THIS LEAVES the "letter-box function" as the one from which an M.P. can draw most satisfaction. He can fight for individual citizens in his constituency who have no weapons, and occasionally he can win real and rewarding victories. Political power, looked at properly, is the ability to change decision *A* to decision *B*. In the kinds of matters I have mentioned so far, this is impossible. Parliament has no idea where and when decision *A* is going to be made. When it does learn, *A* is frequently irreversible because *C*, *E*, and *G* have already issued from it. Yet in fighting for individual constituents, the M.P. has a real taste of political power. Civil servants do not wish to be exposed to their superiors (and, anonymously, to the world) for wrong decisions. Ministers fear career damage from revelations of departmental inefficiency. So the Member has a few political sanctions and something can be achieved. My own greatest successes have been in gaining pensions, sickness pay, compensation and the like for constituents. Now all this is most valuable work. But I doubt if my services under this head are worth the whole of my parliamentary salary.

The aching feeling of time-wasting soon sweeps over any M.P. He prepares a speech for a debate on a subject about which he has specialised knowledge, but is not called. Four front-bench speakers (or eight in a two-day debate) take up almost half the available time, and various Privy Councillors often speak for half-an-hour apiece. The same back-bencher may want to speak in a committee stage but is urged by his Whips to "keep quiet in the national interest" lest he provoke the other side. A few days later he is a little luckier. A debate is

[2] Thus the Rt. Hon. Patrick Gordon Walker, M.P., wrote in these pages [ENCOUNTER, April 1956]: "A British Cabinet Minister can be pretty certain to find himself in charge of a Department of State he knows nothing about.... It is also often considered a good ground for moving him to another Department that he has been three or four years in the same office—he may become too much of an expert himself, and therefore have lost touch with the rough good sense of the man in the street...." Earl Attlee has remarked: "Too much knowledge is a dubious asset." Lord Morrison wanted the Cabinet Minister to be strong enough to "argue with his advisers seeking to persuade them of the validity of his own point of view."

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petering out before the Whips are ready for a vote, so the back-bencher is discovered in the bar, and urged to speak. That he knows nothing of the subject is considered incidental. Thus I sat through two solid days of debate on the Common Market (my academic subject before entering the House)—and was not called. Soon afterwards I was the first person on the Labour side to intervene in a debate on—laundries! I had learnt my material for the speech in the five minutes before being called. The House of Commons is, indeed, a most unprofessional place, and I suspect that expert knowledge is sometimes derided. There is also the boredom of being glued to the House for up to fifteen hours a day just in case there is a vote. Small wonder Lord Butler has argued that nobody can accomplish creative work while he is a member of the House.

All this, I know, does not constitute an argument for changing the constitutional trend of a century. The realities of political life have to be accepted, but surely I can put one question. Are the talents and skills of five hundred back-bench M.P.s being used in the nation's best interests? And since clearly they are not, should not changes be proposed?

THE House of Commons is too small to contain all its members if they are using it as a serious place of work. Few M.P.s have their own offices. Others share desk rooms but these are frequently some way from the House itself, involving frequent and exhausting dashes when the division bells ring out—during a committee stage, work becomes impossible. On entering the House, I was given a locker. Later I acquired a filing cabinet—several hundred yards of corridor away, and "out of bounds" to my secretary. At length I graduated to a desk up Parliament Street. Finally, I have been offered a desk in the precincts of the House, but my secretary/wife would have to stay at Parliament Street. This would have been a laughable proposition in any other institution—a secretary ten minutes' walk away! What do we do with the files? We only have one typewriter (not supplied) between us. So we are staying at Parliament Street, and my secretary's name is now on the list of those waiting for a desk in the precincts; but I have been warned that when she reaches the top of the list, there may just not be a desk for me in that area....

Every M.P. should have an office to himself. (Congressmen in America have a suite of rooms.) Accommodation is also needed for a secretary and research assistant, both of whom should be paid for out of public funds. It is often said that the M.P. is "uninformed." Sometimes this is true, but not for the reason most frequently given—that information is not available. Most information *is* available. But which M.P. has the time for detailed research work?

It has been argued that the situation in some of these respects has recently improved. This is true, but a poor excuse for inaction. Sites are available for further office blocks, and these are urgently needed.

A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CEREMONY is valuable for arresting public attention, but should it be allowed to detract from parliamentary efficiency? Since action is being taken to prevent Black Rod's intrusion into debates, it would seem reasonable to review formalities connected with the Mace and the Sergeant-at-Arms. But these things are not really important. More significant would be changes in the "division system." The public are singularly unimpressed by the spectacle of five hundred M.P.s suddenly appearing from nowhere to vote in a debate they have not heard. Who could object to changes which removed the necessity for them to appear at all? Electronic voting seems elementary, and many practical systems could be found. If Members had a voting key, it could in the event of absence be surrendered to the Whip. This would end the drudgery of being confined to the House. Some might exploit this so that they need never be present, but I believe this kind of Member is dying out (at least on the Labour side). The change would constitute a healthy recognition of the fact that divisions are now quite unimportant, and that there is no virtue in keeping this fact a secret from the broad mass of the public.[3]

EXPERIMENTS with morning sittings have so far been half-hearted and therefore of limited success. The decision that no votes should be taken in the mornings almost certainly resulted from departmental pressure; it would have meant making complicated rules for these sittings which inevitably contain anomalies. Moreover, much interest has thereby been removed from the mornings. The 2.30 p.m.-to-10 p.m.-day has its psychological origin in the expectation that part-time Members were the

[3] The Rt. Hon. R. H. Crossman, M.P., has argued that the British Constitution always revolves round practices which are not known about—the so-called "efficient secret." I am sure this is correct, but I can see no reason for assuming that the public *ought* to be kept ignorant. The last majority Government to fall on a defeat in the division lobbies was that of Gladstone in 1886. Even with an overall majority of three, a Government can be certain to win all the votes it wants to.

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norm. It is also argued that Ministers carry on departmental work in the mornings. Actually, much departmental work is done throughout the day, and Ministers are not always in the House, even in the afternoons. One might also ask how the affairs of the nation benefit from comradely Ministers staying up all night to vote with their colleagues.

A much more radical change should be made to the traditional 2.30 p.m.-to-10 p.m. sitting, by bringing both times forward four hours. Exempted business would still mean that the House would, on occasion, sit later, but petitions to annual statutory instruments would have to be over by 7.30 p.m. (they now conclude at 11.30 p.m.). The House would often rise at 6.30 p.m. and the equivalent of current *all-night* sittings would be a continuation until midnight.

The dangers of exempted business and filibusters on committee stages, defeating the object of these changes by leading to sittings morning, noon and night would be avoided if all bills became time-tabled. Traditionally, oppositions do not like this idea as their major power has been to delay. But good opposition should consist of more than mere time-wasting. If bills are time-tabled, debates could be short and to the point. Government back-benchers would be able to compete for the available time with the opposition. Since the amount of time to be given to different bills would be controversial, a special Speaker's Committee representing all sides of the House could be responsible.

Again, with a view to making the House more workmanlike, I would propose changes relating to the length of individual speeches. There seems no reason why the lucky few should hog the debate at the expense of those waiting to be called. Would a limit of thirty minutes on front-bench spokesmen and fifteen on others be too restrictive? Another sensible change would be in the method of applying to speak. At the moment, Members hoping to speak are expected to let the Speaker know that they hope to "catch his eye." This limits spontaneity in the debate. On the other hand, there is no published list of speakers (as in other Chambers), and Members often sit around for hours, never to be called. A sharp move in one direction or the other would be preferable to this—either there should be a published list, or complete spontaneity (*i.e.*, no pressure on the Chair).

THE PRESENT COMMITTEE SYSTEM is quite ramshackle and has few advantages. Legislative committees are christened unromantically *A*, *B*, *C*, *D* & *E*. They exist for one bill only and deal with the committee stage of most bills. Almost invariably "the Whips are on," so that the party battle, which more properly takes place on the floor of the House, is continued elsewhere. Some bills, notably those dealing with finance, go to the Committee of the Whole House. This contradiction in terms is an outstanding example of the gulf between theory and practice. The bills go to the Committee of the Whole so that all Members have a chance to speak. However, finance is now such a technical matter that the average attendance in the Committee of the Whole for a Finance Bill is often less than the number who would be on a smaller committee.

There are also Select Committees with "powers of scrutiny." They can call for persons and papers. The traditional committees in this respect have been those dealing with Public Accounts, Estimates, and the Nationalised Industries. The current experiment is with committees examining particular subjects, *viz.* Science and Technology or individual Ministries such as Agriculture. The history of the latter is illuminating. Unquestionably, it was chosen because the Minister concerned was willing for his Department to be a guinea-pig. On the other hand, the Minister laid down certain conditions concerning the personnel of the Committee and the subjects it should look at. One specific exclusion was the question of the European Common Market. To the Committee's credit (and, possibly, peril) it ignored this particular restriction. The Committee on Agriculture only exists as such for one year. Next year, we are told, other Ministries may be looked at. This makes the experiment half-hearted and of limited impact. Parliament ought to be overlooking the departments, *all of them*, as a continuing exercise. Of great importance is the consideration that the committee should have a look at the decision-making process on matters "too minor" to attract the attention of a Minister.

The single most significant change which one can advocate concerns the establishment of a series of Parliamentary Standing Committees to look at the work of each of the departments. The Committees should be staffed by experts and would be free to call, for evidence, any member of the appropriate department. Members of Parliament would be free to serve on at least one such Committee, and through the involvement in policy-making and administration which would be implied, would at long last be doing a valuable job of work. The individual M.P. would be encouraged to become an expert in some branch of government activity. There would be a vent for his own interests and his desire to use his abilities constructively to help, if only in a minor way, in the government of the country.

Traditionally, government resistance to this kind of proposal has been based on the Civil

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Service's fear of "political embarrassment." It has been argued that the Civil Service must remain anonymous and under the shelter of the theory of Ministerial Responsibility. In view of the fact that this theory has broken down and political power lodges increasingly in the bureaucracy, I think the argument is irrelevant. It is also sometimes argued that M.P.s should not look at matters involving security. Appropriate arrangements, however, could surely be made for this (as they are in the United States). In any event, this is insufficient reason for inaction in those departments which have nothing to do with national security. I should also stress that no Government would incur a fatal loss of prestige if a Parliamentary Committee uncovered an anomaly or an error in a department's work. Indeed the more the public becomes accustomed to this kind of scrutiny, the less dramatic notice it would take of such findings.

These committees should be appointed for a Parliament rather than renewed each session through the usual channels. This would protect the committee man who pays less heed to front-bench dictates. There *is* a problem of "aging," *i.e.*, virtually irremovable committee men (as in the U.S.A.), but it is less of a problem than that of lack of independence. This kind of change would place Parliament once again near the centre of political decision-making. If an elected assembly has the task of controlling the exercise of political power, that power must first be located and then institutional checks found. But power has moved from appointed Ministers to the Civil Service. This is why the old-fashioned parliamentary controls have ceased to operate effectively.

FINALLY, a linking of the parliamentary functions of legislation and scrutiny might ultimately take place by specialist committees expanding their work to cover bills within their area of interest. Meanwhile, the Committee of the Whole House should be abolished, and all bills should go to a smaller group.

ONE OF MY ILLUSIONS before entering Parliament was that the party machinery on the Government side would be a feedback mechanism whereby the generally unimportant back-bencher could influence the generally all-important executive. Should it not be possible, at confidential meetings, for Ministers and their back-benchers to speak in a much more frank way than on the floor of the House? In practice, meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party are semi-public occasions at which the Government faces, and inevitably defeats, its critics. Unfortunately, both the Government and its regular Left-wing opposition prefer this kind of futility to serious, if undramatic, discussions which would be likely to have more influence. It is a difficult point, but I think it is clear that progress would be made if the rule of secrecy were enforced on Government and back-benchers alike. At the same time P.L.P. committees ought to work much more closely with Ministers and their advisers with a view to being able to influence policy at the pre-decision-making stage. It is true that this advantage would be only open to the majority party, but there ought to be some privileges from being on the winning side. In any event, the central Governmental problem is how to restrain the executive, and this offers a useful additional method.

These suggestions are all in the direction of making Parliament a more efficient place where the talents of Members are used to the utmost advantage. I have frequently heard scathing talk about "professional politicians." But Parliamentary work is, surely, sufficiently important not to be left to the part-timer. Professionalism and specialisation ought to be recognised and encouraged, and not regarded as a subject for scorn. The individual Member, with full research facilities, could become an expert in his chosen field, but would still retain his right to speak as a layman on other matters. The opposition, with the possibility of real influence on the Government through committees, might cease to think of its function as purely to waste time. Parliament could be brought back into the governmental process, and in a way which recognised the contemporary balance of political forces.

Traditionally, advocacy of such changes has been a function of back-benchers desperately wanting to do something useful—and insincere oppositions wanting to discredit the government. Last summer, the House spent a day and a night discussing a time-table motion for the Selective Employment Bill. The Conservatives claimed it was "dictatorial." Labour claimed that the Conservatives had done it before. The debate evaded all the essential issues, which nobody wanted to discuss.[4]

MY REMARKS MAY seem critical of the Labour Government. There is a simple reason for this. They are the party of power, and little can be

[4] Mr. John Mackintosh, M.P., and I, both newcomers to the House, were presumptuous enough to suggest debating "real" issues. During the rest of the debate, there were frequent references to "University Professors" who come to the House to tell Members how to conduct their affairs. . . .

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expected of the opposition. Perhaps it is because the Labour Party institutionalised itself so early that it has always fought clear of advocating institutional change. Hence its periods of office have scarcely altered the basic structure of the country. In fact, by giving more power to the Government, Labour has strengthened the Civil Service machine which effectively runs the country through alternate sets of nominal political masters. Changing the work of Parliament in the ways I have indicated above would place some real limits on this minotaur. It would also be genuinely "revolutionary" for it would not be too easy for Conservatives to turn the clock back at a later date. Above all, the Labour Party has uniquely managed to attract to itself young, professionally-minded people, some of whom are now in Parliament. If their desire to undertake a useful job of work is baulked, then they will, in due course, leave again. Parliament will grow more like that of Bernard Shaw's *Apple Cart*, political life will grow more meaningless, and the country will be run increasingly of, by, and for the bureaucracy.

Money, Rubbish, & T.V. Hopes

On a Shake-up and Its Consequences — By PETER BLACK

THE ADJECTIVE "independent" to describe private-enterprise television in Britain was invented by a public relations counsellor who argued sensibly that independent sounded nobler, less frightening and controversial, than commercial. Hence Independent Television (ITV), though it has never been clear just whom it was independent of. Not of advertisers, not of mass opinion, not of the requirements of the Television Act that created it, not (oh, brother! how not) of the Independent Television Authority, which on 11 June took the whole structure between its teeth and shook it so violently and unexpectedly that even the survivors have not got their breath back.

Lord Derby, chairman of the dispossessed *TWW* station that has served Wales and the West, emerged from a deep state of shock and rage to tell how the I.T.A.'s chairman, Lord Hill, gave him the news. He asked the reason. "'Because you are a London-based company,' Lord Hill muttered." There is dispute as to whether Hill in fact muttered—as a rule he has a pretty rotund politician's delivery—but the fact remains that this criticism of *TWW* is still the only one published and, Derby insists, the only one he was ever given. Hill has further explained that once it had been ruled that all applicants for a contract must have an equal chance of success a company lived with the risk that it would encounter a better competitor, even though this meant that promise must sometimes be preferred to performance. So out went Lord Derby and in came Lord Harlech (with Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, an old dyed-in-the-wool sound-radio man who until now has remained virtually an unknown on television, as his programmes controller).

I must take a few words to explain the ITV structure. It is a federal system based, curiously enough, on that set up in occupied West Germany by the Allies after the war. Four networking companies—*Rediffusion* (five days) and *ATV* (weekends) in London, *Granada* (weekdays) from Manchester, *ATV* (weekdays) from Birmingham, *ABC* (weekends) from Birmingham and Manchester—supply programmes to each other and the ten smaller regional stations. The so-styled Big Four are responsible for providing the nationally-networked programmes, for which the schedules are planned by a committee representing all 14 companies plus the I.T.A. which must approve them. News bulletins are the charge of *ITN*, a non-profit-making company owned by the programme companies. The Authority builds and owns the stations, picks the companies, and controls programmes and advertising according to the Television Act and its interpretation of it. There are no grounds for any appeal against its decisions.

Rediffusion has been ordered to share the four-and-a-half day operation in London with *ABC*, and mortified further by being given the junior share of the partnership. Again no reason has been published. *Rediffusion* attracted noticeably less sympathy than *TWW*, nor did it deserve more. Its former general manager, Captain Tom Brownrigg, R.N., who

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hauled the enterprise off the floor in 1955, wrote a letter to *The Times* in the form of an obituary; and like most obituarists he chronicled virtues well and left out the little weaknesses.

Rediffusion defined its objectives in an article written to salute its eighth birthday by Brian Begg, then its publicity controller. The words were Begg's but the thought was Captain Brownrigg's.

> Within the restrictions of the laws of the day a public service should aim to give the majority of the public what the majority wants to see at the time best available; and what the minority want to see at a time which—unfortunately—must take second place.

Of course any TV network will be run on these lines, the only variation occurring according to what the majority taste happens to be for. When a public-enterprise service comes into competition with the commercial principle, as did the BBC, it has to adopt the same basic programme philosophy or lose its audience. Its freedom remains to do the same thing better, to use the Brownrigg definition as a starting point rather than a fixed law.

ITV LEARNED FROM the American pattern how to get and keep a mass audience night after night. Once they found the right formula (without exception they were more adventurous and daring when they were losing a million pounds a year than when they were making ten) the companies simply repeated it, and none more conspicuously than *Rediffusion*. Its quiz games *Double Your Money* and *Take Your Pick* go back to the first year of ITV and its police series *No Hiding Place* to 1956. They are all at it. *Granada*'s working-class serial *Coronation Street* is in its seventh year and its American-originated quiz *University Challenge* in its fifth. *ATV*'s *Emergency Ward Ten* died recently, aged eleven years. Changes in the formula are in titles more than content.

In its annual reports the I.T.A. seemed to think it all fairly satisfactory. In 1963 Lord Hill, announcing how he would enact his greater powers under the revised Television Act, wrote in his curiously booming prose style:

> All those who spend their lives making TV programmes feel they are working not only in an expanding medium but in an encouraging climate of freedom, and can give to television their full abilities, talents and perhaps genius; that they can work to their full creative stretch. We shall observe Parliament's instructions without hamstringing the artists.

The peak-time flow of quizzes, soap operas, action series, comedy and variety flowed in the same pattern as before, the only major change being an eclipse of American film series in the 8–9 p.m. slot. Lord Hill ordered the companies to replace them with domestic material. Such criticism as disturbed the surface came mostly from the producers of serious programmes who complained that Hill's concept of "family viewing," which virtually ruled out material unsuitable for children before 9 p.m., killed their hopes of introducing more solid food into the nursery diet.

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER that the I.T.A. plays two roles. In public it is the defender and apologist of the companies against the still active faction that regards advertising as wicked and popular programmes as rubbish foisted on an unwilling audience. In private it used considerable power. It could ask to see scripts, order revisions, ban performances. It maintains a weird army of part-time scrutineers who work within the Authority—secretaries, departmental heads, etc.—and watch the shows. Their reports on displays of sex, violence, political bias, and blasphemous or bawdy jokes are taken seriously as additional checks. Mainly, though, the I.T.A. relied on consultation, persuasion, exhortation to improve standards. *Rediffusion* could still say in 1963, in a paragraph that hit off perfectly its complacent understanding of its job,

> where possible the company has done its best to present the arts on the screen. This is not always possible and a case in point is the presentation of music. After trying every possible permutation it was discovered that it is virtually impossible.

And this in the teeth of the BBC's successful record of broadcasts from the London *Promenade* Concerts and long-running music magazines. *Rediffusion* quietened its conscience, like *Granada*, *ATV* and *ABC*, by endowing outside television those cultural branches they didn't want inside it.

All this went on with what seemed the acquiescence of the I.T.A. In acting now with such terrifying severity to *TWW* Lord Hill can be compared to an indulgent parent who after tolerating serious misbehaviour for years suddenly half kills one of the children for not wiping its feet.

SIGNS OF CHANGE were in fact there to be read. One could reason that Michael Peacock would not leave the BBC unless he thought he stood a real chance to get a station. And whereas in 1955 money and the will to risk it had to be rated as qualifications equal to the promise of quality, in 1967 Hill could put quality first and money nowhere. He had his chance to impose the standards he wanted and took it. His bungle is that nobody knows what they are.

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Exactly why the I.T.A. picked *TWW* to make an awful example of instead of Lord Thomson's *Scottish TV*, which had been widely fancied for the role, lies somewhere in I.T.A. records. It is reasonable to assume that Hill had all the evidence he believed he needed and did not choose between the two by flipping a coin. *TWW* went and *Rediffusion* was halved because he did not believe they had served their areas as well as they should.

One can argue for ever whether the judgment should be made in secret. Some say the confrontations between the I.T.A. and the station applicants should have been conducted in public—I must say they would have made a fascinating TV series. But if they were could the press have reported them, bearing in mind that I.T.A. policy is now to encourage newspapers to prop up their declining market by taking shares in this expanding one? How can you "prove" a value judgment? In its early years *Rediffusion* bought its light entertainment as a package from the late Jack Hylton. You could use almost any pejorative word to describe it except one: "unpopular." *Rediffusion*'s tentative suggestions to Jack that the standard ought to be better was countered instantly by Jack producing the ratings charts. But that a judgment is subjective does not mean a case cannot be stated. If Hill felt (for example) that *TWW*'s programmes controller had done a rotten job he could say so under the privilege of his position. I don't believe this continued silence is necessary. If there is injustice it is here. It injures morale among the survivors. It injures public interest. Public money pays for ITV as much as for BBC (I have never been able to follow the claim that there is some magic distinction between the money one hands over in licence fees and in fractions of a farthing on tins of dog food and crispy cod fries) and the I.T.A. ought to account fully and openly to the public. As for the newspapers' increased participation (shares to the *Telegraph*, and even the *Economist*, *Spectator* and *New Statesman*), it is clear that editorial independence will somewhere rest on this television interest. The secrecy in which the recent applications were heard is the newspapers' price of admission; and Postmaster-General Edward Short wondered in the House of Commons how ready deeply committed watchdogs would be to bite themselves. (The precedent of Australian commercial television, owned or controlled by newspaper combines, suggests that the watchdogs do not bite themselves, they bite each other.)

We are left wondering, then, whether Hill acted fairly; and this doubt must create some uncertainty as to whether his earthquake will do more harm than good.

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION is a three-way agreement between programme makers, advertisers, and audience. They arrive at a curious and interesting sameness. If you look first at the top twenty (in terms of money spent) advertisers and then at the Top Twenty programmes as recorded by TAM you notice how alike they are in their interpretation of mass tastes.

In the weeks ending 28 May-4 June the top commercial was OMO and the top show *The London Palladium*. Second place paired Wall's Ice Cream and football. Third place paired the Milk Marketing Board and David Frost's *Frost Report*, fourth the Egg Marketing Board and a drama series, *Trapped*. So it went on: paint, petrol, gas, cheap suits, cornflakes, man-made fibres, electricity, petrol, margarine, beer, bandages, more petrol, washing-up fluid, flour and more detergents were the other half of *Coronation Street*, the *Des O'Connor Show*, the *Eamonn Andrews Show*, *Opportunity Knocks*, *No Hiding Place*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Avengers*. The pairing even seems to exist in the documentary or public affairs field; we'll see *Rediffusion*'s *This Week* balancing an Army recruiting commercial.

The acceptance (I refuse to call anything so meek a demand) is of cheap, mass-produced perishable commodities on one hand and undemanding, repetitive, forgettable programmes on the other. Together they say a lot, and rather sadly, about the quality of life in modern Britain. Can this be all we want?

THE I.T.A.'S ANNUAL GUIDE contributes yearly extracts from surveys of the audience's viewing habits. I set them out for the benefit of ENCOUNTER readers who believe the public wants TV to give it language lessons and opera and that the present peak-hour programmes are shoved down its gullet despite its furious objections.

> "To be acceptable to the majority a play must have plenty of action and a happy, satisfactory ending."
>
> "The principal dislikes are plays featuring sex and violence and that 'leave you in the air.' There is also dislike of technical innovation."
>
> "Watching televised sport is by far the most popular activity on Saturday afternoons throughout the year."

The truth is that for most people in Britain, without a tradition of public fun, life is bloody awful. People who lead dull, monotonous lives and do dull monotonous work do not react against dullness towards brightness. They are all the readier to accept monotonous entertainment. The popularity of TV in a country is in direct proportion to the amount of boredom in

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it. Its standards rest on this sad, aimless wantlessness as much as on the *diktats* of the I.T.A.

WILL THE NEXT six years of ITV be better than the last twelve? David Frost of *Thames Television*, the new contractors for London's 2⅔-day week-end, said the company would aim for more serious and current affairs programmes—"Less variety with a capital V and more variety with a small one." That was rather well put. *York Television* said it would be strongly regional, "presenting Yorkshire to Yorkshire and to the country." But when he was asked whether this meant the end of *Take Your Pick* and other long-standing attractions Mr. Ward Thomas, programmes controller, rebuked the questioning reporter ("you despise people") and added that it would not be right to deprive the viewers of certain programmes because some people did not approve of them. He was quite right. It wouldn't. The Harlech Consortium said:

> We have promised a lot and now we have to reconcile high ideals with hard commercialism.

It can say that again, and I bet it does.

Although ITV since 1955 contributed a great deal, particularly to the democratisation of broadcasting in Britain, and led new movements in the presentation of news and drama, it has accepted the audience's acceptance too completely. The figures show that the longest-running shows are the most popular; and for the companies they are the best business. A serial like *Coronation Street*, with a permanent set and artists, is a wonderfully good bargain for *Granada* in terms of return for money. No wonder Mr. Sidney Bernstein doesn't scrub it.

The serious charge against ITV is that people cannot want what they do not know exists. Supply must precede, not follow, demand; and anyone in television who affirms the contrary is consciously attempting to deceive.

The perfect analogy, which came to me in a single blinding instant of revelation following fourteen years of thinking about television, goes like this: Television is like a restaurant where the fixed charge for a meal is £5. The management is anxious, or at any rate willing, to give the customers fair value for their money, but is frustrated by the timid conservatism of the majority which wants only beans, sausages, and chips.

"But that only comes to ten shillings," explains the management, pointing out the variety available of pâté, ham, beef, exotic fruits and drinks. "It's your five pounds, you're entitled to the value from it."

But we smile shyly and kindly and reply, with what someone called the long, long patience of the plundered poor: "No, thanks, we're all right as we are. We'd rather have this, really. There's lots worse off than us. Mustn't grumble. Have a go, eh?" and so on.

The management can do two things about this. It can continue to coax us to have our money's worth, by spreading the choices before us until they have lost their frightening novelty. Or it can shrug its shoulders, take its £4 10s. profit (mostly handed over to the Government in taxation, it is fair to say) and put it into publishing and motorway restaurants and gramophone records, saying to itself: "You've got to give them what they want."

Another way to put it is like this: if your audience can't tell marge from butter is this a proper reason for giving them marge? or butter?

THERE'S NO DOUBT that there is plenty of slack to take up and ideas to try. None of the new names in ITV went into it for the money, as they have deafeningly assured us. *Thames Television* has in Frost, Michael Peacock, and others to be announced a useful gathering of professional creative talent. As programmes controller of BBC-1 Peacock's record is on the line. If you want to know what he'll do with his company's seven hours of output a week you need only look at what he did for BBC-1.

He competed for the mass audience by copying its programme pattern (though ranging far wider) and trying to do it better show for show. On the whole he succeeded. *Z Cars* was better than *No Hiding Place*. As soap opera *The Newcomers* is a more honest mirror of its world than *Coronation Street*'s subtle flattery of the poor and exploited. The BBC's comedy is better in daring and technical quality. It is impossible to imagine Johnny Speight's outrageous comedy epic, *Till Death Us Do Part*, on ITV, or even *The Frost Report*; or opera or ballet or period drama.

Peacock's BBC-1 is a strong argument for Frost's idea that the ITV public is ready for better, less soporific stuff than it gets. Despite the heavy built-in national preference for ITV programmes the BBC has held an average of 40 per cent. of the audience over the years and now claims half of it. This suggests that the ITV public is not as satisfied as the rating figures say.

But on BBC-1 Peacock had advantages which he will now have to do without. He could plan for a single national chain. He had no need to consult a network committee where the pressure inevitably would favour compromise and safety. He did not have to satisfy a controller who was

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separated from the problems of programme production. Now he has to sell his programmes to a network which is still the creation of *Granada*'s Sidney Bernstein, *ATV*'s Lew Grade, *ABC*'s Howard Thomas, and *Rediffusion*'s John McMillan. Anyone who wants to change things has to persuade companies that have topped the TAM-ratings for years on a policy of no change.

IT IS SAID that programmes are bound to improve because Lord Hill has shown that he will take the station away from a company that doesn't produce good enough programmes. But he has also shown that no company however good can count on its contract being renewed. It can always "encounter a better competitor." This could lead to a disconcerting insecurity which might tempt some contractors to make as much quick and easy money as they can during their six years and increase the highly questionable practice of diversifying their interests instead of putting the money back where it came from. Commercial television is now much more like a gold mine than it used to be; the ore can run out. Raymond Williams in BBC-2's *The Money Programme* put up the interesting idea that the system of awarding contracts may prove too unattractive; it might reawaken interest in the idea of empowering the I.T.A. to plan the programmes, sell the advertising, and buy its programmes from competing independent production companies. This—I wonder how many can remember it?—was the recommendation of the discredited Pilkington Report back in 1960. It could yet happen. But I believe the new situation is more stable than it looks. Hill wants "more imagination, more experiment, new ideas, new faces, new people. . . ." He knows well enough that good television does not come out of insecure foundations. The years of big money are over and commercial television is as much its own tax-gatherer as its own mint. In spite of the projections of probable profits the main objective of the survivors will be to stay in business, and if companies give Hill what he needs I don't believe they will be in any danger.

This makes nonsense of his contention that the door must not be closed to new applications, but the contention was coined to meet a need. He wanted something to justify firing a contractor and frightening the others. The gigantic threat can now rest in its cupboard.

HOW FAR IMPROVEMENTS can come by order nobody can say. The I.T.A. proposes to end the old system by which the ten small companies bought programmes from the big four in a blind package-deal. Now they will inspect and approve first and pay a charge based on merit and cost. When you ask what "merit" means you fall back on more questions, such as: Who decides? Lord Hill? Or the families that buy all that soap?

For some reason it has never been thought quite proper in Britain that audiences should have rubbish on their TV because they like it, though it's accepted that they can have it from books, movies, and newspapers. (Television is such a costly and complicated new marvel that to waste it goes against the grain.) Nevertheless, the Brownrigg doctrine that TV is for the majority is unshaken. All TV can do is insist on improving what the public likes and widening the range of what it likes. There is a limit to what can be done in a mass entertainment seeking to divert the family, and the best way to put TV right is to improve the houses, the schools, the towns, the general quality of life of which TV is an accusing reflection.

Some of the editorials have said that more competition would do better than more supervision, but competition between commercial TV undertakings seems to accelerate the downward rush if the American experience is a true guide. British TV is probably the best in the world because the standards, and the public expectations, are set by the BBC—an organisation which really is independent.

All ITV's considerable achievements have been in those sections of TV where the producers have been encouraged to compete. We are in for a much wider and more intense competition between public and private enterprise. The kind of thing we can hope for was summarised by Harry H. Corbett, the star of the BBC's smash-hit comedy series, *Steptoe and Son*, in a BBC-2 series on Acting: "Give us room on TV to fail. Otherwise we'll just go on giving you the same old turgid nonsense time after time. . . ."

P.S. I wrote this piece before the news of Lord Hill's translation to the Chairmanship of BBC Governors burst over the BBC like a giant whack from some jester's bladder.

It could change the balance of British TV by upsetting the tradition whereby the Director-General as chief executive runs the BBC's programme operation. I think it is a carefully aimed blow by the Wilson government against a BBC that they deludedly suppose to be more hostile to them than it would be to any other government. It will not succeed unless Sir Hugh Greene should play the card that Wilson is trying to force on him: to resign. The BBC is as wily as the Catholic Church in guarding its independence. It has defeated better men than Lord Hill.

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Malcolm Lowry

A First Impression — By JAMES STERN

THE FIRST TIME I set eyes on him was one wintry night in Paris, in 1933.

But before speaking of that night, I should say that a few weeks previously I had read by chance a book, just published, called *Ultramarine*. It was one of those thinly disguised autobiographical first novels. The author's name meant nothing to me, but the book did. It was about an Englishman, an educated young man, who had signed on to a ship in Liverpool as a deckhand, or trimmer. Indeed the writer had evidently, as the romantic phrase goes, "run away to sea." I thought that was wonderful. Here was someone, probably of my own age, who had done what I had always wanted to do. In fact, I had wanted so much to "go to sea" that I had been willing, at the age of twelve, to face the years at an English naval college; until one day someone had warned the Irish-born Protestant boy that in order to pass into such a college he would have to stand before a group of medical men—*naked!* No. That, for this twelve-year-old, was too much: if not actually hitting, it was surely snooping, below the belt.

So what, finally, did I do? I did "run away." Not, however, to sea, but to a somewhat remote region of Africa. And from that experience, some time later, I had written a number of thinly disguised autobiographical stories. Eventually, a year or so before that night in Paris, these grim tales had been published in book form under the highly unsalable title: *The Heartless Land*.

It was pelting with rain that night in Paris. I was on my way to a party in the studio of a friend, another impecunious writer, who lived in the Rue Daguerre. By the time I had turned the corner of what was then the Avenue d'Orléans, water was trickling down my neck, my feet were squelching in my shoes. Only in Africa, however, had I been obliged to relieve thirst with rain. I was also empty-handed. In the company I kept in those days a man who turned up at a party without at least one bottle of wine got what most of us considered he deserved: a dirty look, and sometimes the door as well. So I ducked into a *bistro*.

To me one of the many glories of Paris is that its inhabitants are practically immune to human eccentricity. Neither to the *patron* behind the bar, nor to the customer sitting alone at one of four small tables, did it seem in the least surprising that between them on the sawdust-covered floor there lay stretched, flat on his back, evidently asleep, a robust-looking fellow with a week of stiff red stubble on his face, and across his stomach a guitar. Round his neck the recumbent figure wore a scarlet bandanna, over his Herculean chest a jacket of royal blue tweed, and on his legs a pair of dirty grey flannel trousers. What I also could not help noticing was that, although the rain had been coming down in torrents all afternoon and evening, the sturdy brown shoes on his remarkably small feet appeared to be dry....

Standing at the bar, I asked the *patron* for a *coup de rouge* and two bottles of white wine: *ordinaire—pour emporter*. As the glass of red wine was being placed upon the bar, I heard behind me what sounded like a stifled yawn or groan. And turning my head, I saw that the figure on the floor had risen to his feet. He was considerably shorter than I had expected. Guitar gripped in his left hand, he approached the bar in slow, very deliberate steps, until his right elbow was within a few inches of my left. Alert, we squinted at each other out of the corners of our eyes.

"Excuse me, sir," he suddenly said, in a very English English, "but could you possibly be—er —British?"

To my surprise and embarrassment, I heard myself reply: "Oh, is my French as bad as all that?"

"Oh, not at all. On the contrary. It's just those flannel—those *bags*!"

He let out a chuckle. He smiled. His teeth were white, and even. Instantly his whole scrubby face lit up, expressing an indefinable charm.

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"We at least have *them* in common," he said. "Let us try not to lose them." And he put out his hand—a surprisingly small hand, I noticed later, with short stubby fingers. But I winced in their vise.

Then it happened.

"The name's Lowry," he said. "Malcolm."

I stared. And told him mine.

To my amazement, *he* stared, his hairy mouth agape.

It was I who managed to find words first. "Liverpool?" I uttered. "*Ultra*-Liverpool?"

"Liverpool. Yes," he flashed. "Painted white across my stern!"

I had not time to laugh, for up went his arms, guitar and all, and I found myself enveloped in a rib-crushing hug—and a cloud of absinth. "Bound," came his hoarse voice in my ear, "bound for the Cape, lud! All aboard for the heartless land!"

Then, falling apart, we looked each other over, like two dogs whose tails did not wag, but were held high: the prospects for the immediate future seemed boundless. At last, as a substitute for all the things that clamoured to—and would, we knew, in time—be said, we shattered the silence of the *bistro* with burst after burst of laughter.

"Patron!" boomed Malcolm Lowry in his very English French. *"Un pernod fils, si vous plait. Et pour mon ami...."*

"Un rouge," I added. *"Un ballon."*

The grimace of the future author of *Under the Volcano* was not lost on me. By midnight, however, each of us had convinced the other that he was a budding genius. Of himself I believe Malcolm laughingly boasted that he would soon be "out-Mobying Melville."

NOW ONE MIGHT have thought that to any young person such an encounter would have been a memorable occasion, an incident sufficiently surprising to be recorded or resurrected in conversation over the years by one as well as the other of the participants. Yet in retrospect it seems quite in keeping with Lowry's enigmatic character that from that night in Paris until his death in Sussex in 1957 not once, in our correspondence or in my presence, do I remember him referring to this first meeting. And although I grew to realise that of facts Malcolm, like many other writers of fiction, was no passionate lover, whenever I heard someone ask rhetorically: "But can you really believe what Lowry says?" I would be reminded of what I can only presume was his inability or refusal to recognise the coincidental aspects of our first encounter. Personally, I have always been inclined to think that Lowry looked upon coincidences as unphenomenal phenomena; that

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he took them for granted as the permanent and necessary clothing for his own particular psyche. Nor do I feel it a contradiction to say that I believe he loved coincidences enough to miss them when they failed to recur, whereupon I can imagine him, in secret and with a grin of infinite cunning, setting about to create one—more unlikely than those that hitherto had caused his friends to shake their heads in disbelief! Here I am hazarding a guess, of course, but how else can one account for his erratic, restless, self-obsessed life having been so packed with eerie happenings, with inexplicable signs and portents, with stolen manuscripts, with sudden mysterious conflagrations in which houses, including his own, would be burned to the ground, his books and chunks of huge unfinished novels lost? From such natural or man-made catastrophes and accidents on land Lowry himself would escape intact by what invariably seemed a miracle, and he would manage to survive at sea (though this was largely thanks to his prowess in the water) when other men would surely have drowned.

Did Lowry himself offer any explanation for such a peculiar concurrence of events? To this question he might insist that all his life he had felt haunted by coincidences, or he might add to the aura of largely self-created mystery by an involved dissertation on the mystical dogmas of voodoo and cabalism. When confronted, he would not deny that he possessed magic powers. *"Aah!"* he would breathe, his whole face alight with pleasure. Then I used to think I had never seen a smile so infectious, a pair of eyes so sly. Yes indeed, Malcolm was quick to create his own legend.

A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE Lowry legend was the man's physical strength. Something of this power I was soon to learn from personal experience, for that night in Paris did not end in the *bistro* in the Rue Daguerre. In fact, like other nights I was to spend with Lowry, this first one had, in the conventional bed-time sense, no end....

Whether my newly-found friend had been invited to the party up the street, whether I suggested he should come along, or whether he himself had tacitly decided to accompany me, I no longer remember. I am certain, however, that we arrived at the studio together. I am also sure that by midnight "full-swing" would be too mild a term to describe the state the party had reached. The studio, ill-lit and under a haze of tobacco smoke, was jammed with young people, many of whom I knew and most of whom were dancing with the abandon appropriate to the latest jazz from Louis Armstrong, to their ages, and the hour.

No sooner had I stepped across the threshold than I did a most unfortunate thing. What I had *meant* to do, at sight of so many familiar faces, was clap my hands above my head. What I had not taken into account was that each hand held a full bottle of wine. The immediate result of my absent-mindedness can probably be imagined. Following the splintering crack there fell on my head and down my neck a cascade of glass and wine. A roar of laughter went up, and in my effort to cross the room I found myself severely buffeted by whirling couples. Suddenly I tripped over someone's feet; lost my balance; was about to fall. To check the fall my hands shot out to the first object that caught my eye. This object was a stove . . . one of those black, innocent-looking Victorian stoves from the top of which rises what the French call a *tuyau*, or pipe. It was at this *tuyau* that my fingers tried to grab. And succeeded. The yell of agony that I uttered must, I feel sure, have silenced, if only for an instant, even that crowded room. The next thing I knew I was being hoisted like a sack of potatoes upon someone's shoulders. I was riding, head down, up a ladder. Then I felt myself being deposited slowly, with infinite care, upon a bed.

"I could have told you!" came the hoarse, indignant voice close to my ear. "That beastly wine! *Red* wine, too! The ruin of many a good man!..."

To identify himself there was no need for my good Samaritan to have spoken, such was the overpowering stench of pernod.

An hour or two later, after my friend had bathed my hands in balm—butter, olive oil, or maybe raw meat, until at last the pain had receded—I told him, sitting on the terrace of the Café Dôme, that since a certain night on the Mediterranean, in a sailor's tavern named the "Zanzibar" (Zanzi-bar, Zanzi-bar, Malcolm repeated in a whisper, and I can see him storing away the syllables in his fabulous memory), I told him that since that night I had never again been able to face anything that even reminded me of anise. "The very sight of it!" I said, as I watched him raise the muddy-yellow liquid to his lips.

"But, my dear chap!" he exclaimed in genuine surprise. "Surely you were taught always to return to the saddle immediately after a fall?"

"Well," I faltered, "there are falls and falls...."

"Ah, yes. Those from that old mare named Grace! Don't I know! Don't I know!" He paused, then added with funereal solemnity: "To avoid the fall, one should always take great care to lie prone. Preferably on God's earth. Or the floor."

He sighed, raised his glass, then embarked

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upon a story about a *bordello* he claimed to have known in the port of Zanzibar. By the time the story ended the waiters of the Dôme had started piling the chairs on to the terrace tables, the great shutters came rolling down, and over the city the night-sky began slowly giving way to a steel-grey dawn. It was then, without plan or pre-arrangement, that we set out upon the first of what Malcolm called "little walks." As may be imagined, nothing connected with Lowry, save perhaps his feet and hands, could be considered "little." Of this first walk certain vivid memories stand out. I know where we walked *to*, and, more surprising perhaps, the hour at which we finally landed up in my flat in a house in what was then the Rue René Pauline. Briefly, we walked from the Dôme to the Place Pigalle, and back to Montparnasse by way of Les Halles. Not far as the crow flies. But we were not crows. Moreover, when we stopped for what Malcolm called a "breather," it was not on a branch. This, the first, but not the longest of our "little walks," lasted twenty-eight hours....

AS WALKING COMPANIONS Malcolm and I were not well-matched. Unlike me, he was short in the leg. His gait, incidentally, was something special. No one who saw it could disbelieve that he had been a seaman. One landlubber we knew used to claim that he had only to catch sight of Lowry approaching to feel his stomach begin to heave and his hand go out to the rail. Unlike me Malcolm was, need I say, a talker, or rather a monologist. Unlike mine, his bump of locality on land was erratic. In cities, I don't think he ever knew where he was. Yet should I hesitate too long at a street corner, he would complain that I had "becalmed the ship," that "one should never set sail without a compass," or that "your canvas, mate, is not fully spread." Again, unlike me, Malcolm was not a visual person, or rather our eyes absorbed different aspects of the visible world. At night when I would be observing the faces of other pedestrians, searching for the name of an alley, looking at buildings, Malcolm's interest would be limited to bars and stars. He would be constantly gazing skywards, attempting to give me lessons in astronomy, a favourite subject, my ignorance of which genuinely grieved him. He also held grievances against astronomers. "See," he would proclaim, standing stockstill and raising his face in the midst of traffic, "see that luminous band, those countless gems? Know what they call 'em? The *Milky* Way! Milk-my-eye!" he would growl. "Pah!"

Well, Malcolm certainly could not complain that there was anything milky about our "way" across Paris. On this "little walk" we started off,

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I remember, on the first lap of what I still call "La Route des Grands Hommes"—that is a somewhat circuitous course, roughly by way of St. Germain-des-Près, "just to fire a salvo," as Malcolm put it, at Pascal and other *grands garçons* who served the "intellectual world" at the Cafés Flore and Magots (both closed, of course, at 5 a.m.); a brief halt before the Hôtel d'Alsace to pay our respects to the author of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*; back down the cavernous, shopless, cat-and-history-infested Rue Visconti, to bow to Balzac; then along the Quai de Voltaire, over the river, round the Place de la Concorde, to the Rue d'Amsterdam, to hail Heinrich Heine.

To those acquainted with the city of Paris these proper names may convey some sense of direction; what I cannot hope to express in a few pages is the passage of time, the hours it took us to cover the distance, not—as my sea-hating, horse-loving family would have said—from "point-to-point," but "as hounds ran." Somewhere along the line this fox took, in any case, after many a "breather" and an occasional "sonvich" in *bistros* catering to the very late and the early, we reached a restaurant in the *huitième arrondissement*, a region through which in days and nights to come I used to attempt to increase the speed of Malcolm's crawl. The restaurant I remember as being elegant even from the outside, and the hour must have been approaching noon, for I could see from the streets that the stools at the bar were being swiftly occupied by members of the international *louche* and *beau monde*, who kept passing under our jaundiced eyes through the polished swing doors. Aware of the appearance of both the place and the people, I hesitated to enter: I had an unhealthy suspicion that such seats as might be free at the bar would, once the management caught sight of us, promptly become *"réservés, Messieurs, je regrette."* But Malcolm, I realised, was determined. "Ah," he breathed, "I smell something good." So in we marched.

As I had also anticipated, no sooner had we circumnavigated the doors than every man and woman at the bar stopped eating—to stare. However, once seated on a couple of stools two enormous menus fell miraculously in front of us. "We're over Becher's!" I muttered. "Ain-tree to starboard!" echoed my friend, "full steam ahead!" And he ordered an *aquavit—"un double!"* As it turned out, our unorthodox attire in the plush setting, not to mention what must have radiated from our skins, enabled us both swiftly to acquire at the crowded bar a comfortably wide berth.

"Now then, old chum," said Malcolm, spreading his arms and studying *la carte* with unusual care, "let us relax. It isn't every day that deckhands travel first-class to Oslo!"

IT WAS THEN THAT I began to learn more about Lowry's life. It soon transpired that what had attracted him to this three-star restaurant had been its name, "La Scandinavie," which he kept repeating to himself in a nostalgic whisper as he threw back his head and demanded more of *"la même chose*. Best appetiser in the world, my dear fellow! Unlike pernod, guaranteed not to make you into a humpty-dumpty again!" (Here I should add that hours ago, in deference to my companion, I had switched from red to white wine.) From a few words I heard him exchange with the barman, I then discovered Lowry's talent for learning languages. Like his master, James Joyce, Malcolm had taught himself Norwegian in order to read the works of Ibsen in the original. This led him to tell the story about how he had once jumped ship in the port of Oslo with the express purpose of meeting the Norwegian poet, Nordahl Grieg, whose novel *The Ship Sails On* had sent Lowry "rushing up to the poop" in excitement.

Once launched upon a story Malcolm was liable, as in his longer fiction, to digress, to associate so freely that one would find oneself carried away on currents that turned out to be but tributaries of his subject's main stream. His monologues had the quality of dreams, and to reconstruct such talk uttered and heard as a rule "under the influence" and at night—nights in themselves like dreams—is impossible. Before embarking on his voyage to Norway in search of the novelist, Lowry, I believe, had not been in correspondence with Grieg, nor had he made enquiries at the consulate in London or elsewhere.[1] He thus arrived in Oslo not only alone but without a clue as to the whereabouts of the man he intended to visit. Only after hours of wandering about the city did he discover that Grieg lived not in Oslo at all, but Heaven knows how many scores of miles away in the north of the country. Never one for short-cuts, for modern means of transport (even in later life and married, he would travel only by freighter, the smaller, the slower, the better), Lowry acquired a map and there and then, armed presumably with a compass, set out into the foreign land on foot through the snow. That he eventually succeeded in finding Nordahl Grieg I know, but how long the journey took him, how far he walked, how he was greeted on arrival, I cannot remember. There remains in my mind after thirty-four years only a vague

[1] Since this memoir was written I have learned that Lowry wrote several long letters to Grieg, but failed to post them.—J.S.

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memory of Malcolm, footsore and hungry, knocking diffidently on the door of a remote mountain cabin in the middle of the night....

The area between "La Scandinavie" and the Rue d'Amsterdam was, I think, the largest we managed to cover that day without "heaving-to" *en route* for a "breather." Having recited in doleful unison:

> *Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten,*
> *Dass ich so traurig bin....*

outside the house where "*der grosser* Heinrich" and his fat Mathilde had lived a hundred years before, we crossed the street into the Gare St. Lazare—ostensibly, as I remember Malcolm saying on future occasions, "to cock a metaphorical finger at my countrymen, as they emerge from the Heart of Darkness into the City of Light." In reality, we "put in" at the Gare for the simple reason that we happened to share a romantic passion for railway stations. The restaurant at the St. Lazare, moreover, has a convenient "deck" on which one can "sit out" on earthbound wicker chairs while travelling vicariously the Seven Seas—seas which my twenty-four-year-old companion had already sailed.

In his life, in most of his work, in conversation, Lowry invariably returned to the sea. Sitting in the Paris station, swopping stories of our early wanderings, he began telling me how he had set out on his first long voyage from home (to China via the West Indies), while still in his 'teens.

"So did I."

"Ah, thought so. Shake, chum!"

Although his earliest love, I think, had been for the works of Conrad, it was under the impact of the first plays of the living dramatist O'Neill that Lowry had written *Ultramarine*, for whose central character he chose the name of Eugene Dana Hilliot. Malcolm then told me the story of his first literary pilgrimage, in 1929, from England to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to meet the American poet, Conrad Aiken, an occasion that marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship. This story struck me as so similar to that of his voyage to Norway that I felt inclined to take them both with more than a grain of salt. Years later, however, I learned that the two tales were perfectly true. In 1929, at the time Lowry was homeward bound from his visit to America, I happened to have set out from England to the United States in the hope of eventually making my way round the world—a piece of information that caused my companion to clap his hands and burst into doggerel: "I knew our paths had crossed before! But 'twas night, chum, the seas were high. So was the bosun. So was I...."

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MACMILLAN

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SO FAR AS I KNEW, he could have been "high" ever since! In Paris, at our age, in those early days of our not-so-easily won freedom, such consciences as we had about indolence and our chosen profession were soon drowned by words and what we consumed. As for Time, it neither dragged nor flew: it had no meaning. Of the fact that night had fallen when Malcolm muttered in the station that we might "weigh anchor," that as we mounted the steep incline towards the Place Pigalle the clocks of Montmartre were probably striking ten or eleven, or indeed that a night and a day had passed since we met, neither of us was aware.

Here, in Utrillo-land, having long since forsaken "La Route des Grands Hommes," I have a vague recollection of my friend suddenly halting on the *trottoir* to deliver to passers-by a speech on the glories of French civilisation. These impromptu remarks he attempted to utter, unfortunately, in French, so that very soon a considerable crowd gathered, to cheer or jeer, as a result of which we were asked, most politely by a local *gendarme*, to move on. Which we did. But at a pace which by now had dropped almost imperceptibly from a crawl to a bedroom-slipper shuffle. The night-sky had lost its fascination; the past, even the sea, had for once been exhausted as subjects for another monologue. Now ladies of all ages, but not of the oldest profession, found themselves confronted at close quarters by bloodshot eyes in a hairy face in which a mouth would open to growl:

"Ah, mademoiselle,
Comme vous êtes belle... !"

Followed by a glance of panic and the sound of fast-retreating heels.

By the time we reached Les Halles the carts and the *camions*, carrying in from the country every conceivable raw material that man can consume, were clattering over the Pont Neuf into the great market. In a tiny tavern frequented by fishmongers Malcolm had an altercation with the *patronne*—a woman with the neck and biceps of an all-in wrestler—over the glass in which she had served him his calvados. "A mere *thimble*!" he spluttered, fitting the empty glass on to a finger and holding up his hand. *"Voilà, Madame, un—un thimble!"* And turning to me: "I say, old fellow, what the hell's the French for thimble?" Just as I was expecting a shout of *"sale étranger"* from our rear, I heard my friend settling the dispute by demanding a whole bottle of calvados—which he proceeded to ram into his coat pocket. Then, with the courtesy of a *grand seigneur*, he offered his hand to the giantess, leaned forward over the bar, put his lips to her awe-inspiring forearm, bowed to the French fishmongers and, blowing out his cheeks, shuffled from the tavern in my wake.

After dawn in the Luxembourg, that dream-world of all France's public gardens, we both broke into what would be blasphemy to call song. What we hummed, crooned, and howled, Heaven knows. The combination of our unmusical roars must have been appalling. We were still blissfully yelling when, rounding that lovely tree-covered corner opposite the Place Edmond Rostand, Malcolm caught sight of the figure of George Sand reclining on the grass. I can see him still, in his jacket of royal blue tweed, the bottle protruding from his pocket, lumbering off the gravel path on to the forbidden lawn. Reaching the silent novelist in stone, he gazed affectionately down at her, settled himself on one elbow beside her, laid an arm round her neck, and then, as though suddenly remembering his manners, reached for the bottle and solemnly offered it to the lifeless lips of the woman who had loved one of my friend's favourite composers. At last, with a disappointed wag of his head, he raised the bottle high and turned it upon his own insatiable throat.

How, from where, did I witness this scene? From a wooden bench not twenty feet away, where I sat huddled in such convulsions of laughter that finally Malcolm felt sufficiently concerned to take leave of the lady and thump me on the back, to raise me up for the last lap of our walk through the sunlit morning.

"Oh, I'm tired," I moaned, *"I want to go to bed,*
I had a little drink about an hour ago...."

Instead of finishing off the ditty, Malcolm raised one arm and pointing north-west, recited in resonant if somewhat slurred tones:

"Must we to bed indeed? Well then,
Let us arise and go like men,
And face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed...."

Little does he know... I thought, as we rose and together tottered away under the trees.

MY FLAT IN THE Rue René Pauline was on the sixth and top floor. Long accustomed to the steep ascent, I knew how to take it, slowly, in my own particular stride. But I could see, leaning over the banisters at every other *étage*, that my friend, on conquering one flight and before embarking upon the next, was feeling the need for "stoking up the boiler." By the time he had reached my door he was panting for breath and his eyes seemed to have receded into his head. He stood in the narrow hall, leaning his weight on one hand flat against the wall, the other on his hip. "I say, old fellow," he gasped. "You

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must be parched. Here, have—have a *drink*!" And pulling the almost empty bottle from his pocket, he thrust it out at arm's length.

"No thanks, old chap," I managed to say, "I've just had one." But I took the bottle from him.

An instant later I almost gave it him back—for suddenly his head drooped, one leg buckled, and like a bull at the end of battle, he began to crumble. Down the wall he slowly slithered. Flat, prone he lay, his head in the crook of one arm, face to the floor. I bent over, laid my hand on his head. "Where's my guitar?" he gargled. And began to snore.

THIS, ON ALMOST any other morning of the year, would have put an end to my first impression of the man whose acquaintance I had made in a *bistro* thirty-four hours before. Alas, this was no ordinary morning....

I had thrown a blanket over the recumbent figure, taken off my clothes, and was about to fall into bed when I caught sight on the mantelpiece of a sheet of paper on which I read, scrawled in my own hand: *Rose in Paris, breakfast here Tuesday.*

My eyes fled to the clock, to the calendar on the wall—and, clutching my aching head, I stifled a scream.

Rose was my "little sister," most innocent and tender-hearted of girls, barely out of her teens. Rose was a girl who until now had never ventured "abroad." Rose was a girl on a visit to an aunt who lived in Paris. Rose was a girl whose Big Brother also lived, for some unaccountable reason, "out there." Rose was a girl who had never had a drink. Rose was a girl who was coming to breakfast . . . *any minute*. My head began to reel. Oh Rose was a girl was a girl was a girl....

At last I grew calm. I even grew resolute. I marched towards my snoring friend. I bent down, put my arms round his waist. Between him and the bathroom lay eight feet of floor: those feet might as well have been miles. I marched into the bathroom, put my head under the cold tap. Without looking in the mirror I began to shave....

Oh, him? He's a friend.... He isn't feeling very well.... I should leave him.... No, he doesn't like to be touched. . . . Oh, he's really very nice but—to tell you the truth—he *bites*!

No, that wouldn't do, muttered the shaven face with the aching eyes, when—the doorbell rang, the heart gave a bound, and trembling hands grabbed a pair of trousers and a coat.

"Ah, there you are!"

"I say, you do live high up! Mummy sends her love—Oh!—Oh, *look*! What's happened? The poor man! Is he hurt?"

"Not a bit of it, Rose. Come on in—or rather, if you wait one second I'll come out with you. Malcolm won't want to be disturbed——"

"Oh, but the poor man! Why is he on the floor? I'm sure he ought to be in bed?"

"Not a bit of it, he *loves* floors——"

"But he can't be *all right*...."

"Perfectly all right. Now I'm ready——"

"But couldn't we lift him? Together? Why does he snore so loud? I'm sure he's *ill*——"

"Not a bit of it, Rose."

I was dressed, ready, my hand was on the door-knob. "Look here, I'll tell you," I said in exasperation. "He has been out celebrating. Yesterday was his—his birthday—and he's just sleeping it off. He'll be——"

"You mean," asked my little sister as I guided her over the threshold, "you mean he's——*drunk*?"

"That's it," I gasped. "Drunk. But not disorderly."

"Oh dear, how awful!" she groaned, following me down the stairs.

THAT SHOULD indeed be the end of my first impression of Malcolm Lowry. Yet I feel it would be incomplete, that it would be

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doing an injustice to him, to his enigmatic character, above all to his memory, if I were to omit a brief epilogue. I have said that Lowry never mentioned our first meeting. This is not strictly true. He did refer to it once, in February of the year 1947—fourteen years after the event.

The occasion was the beginning of a momentous month in Lowry's life: the month that saw the publication in New York of his novel *Under the Volcano*—a book grossly under-rated in the author's native land. Malcolm had been working on the novel for some ten years; he had rewritten it three times, and I forget how many times it had been rejected. I had read the final version in proof in New York and sent him a lengthy cable of congratulations to Haiti, where he and his wife were spending a week or two en route to America from their home in Vancouver.

In pencil on a picture postcard, Lowry had replied to that cable as follows:

> Dear old Jimmy,
>
> You rendered me speechless, and I still am, having been laid up in hospital here with a cough and Lady Hamilton on the wall by George Romney. There was a mocking bird too, and a bird that piped, and a man next door that mooed with pain. I am ok now. We leave to-morrow for Miami, thence proceed by bus to New York —reaching there mid-February sometime. Can you find us some hole to crawl into—a previous hole fell through. Thank you a million.
>
> Malcolm.

I cannot remember whether I succeeded in finding the Lowrys a "hole" in New York, but I do know that on the afternoon of his arrival I arranged to meet Malcolm in the large mid-Victorian bar of the now defunct Murray Hill Hotel. When I entered he was already there, the only customer in the huge room, standing in his most characteristic posture, his hands flat on the bar, his right foot on the brass rail, eyes raised as though gazing out to sea. I had not seen him for more than thirteen years. His face had a weather-beaten look, his forehead was furrowed; otherwise Time had changed him astonishingly little. We greeted each other Spanish-fashion and I called him Consul. Then my eye fell on the glass that stood before him on the bar. It was a wine glass and in it I saw wine and the colour of the wine was red.... I glanced from the glass to him and back. Would that bell ring in Lowry's fabulous memory? Evidently not, for he began telling me about Haiti, about voodoo rites as practised on that island, until suddenly he stopped and in the silence bestowed on me a look that struck me as almost aggressive.

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"By the way, old boy," he said at last, choosing the words with care and speaking with slow deliberation, "I have a little bone to pick with you. By now there isn't much flesh on it. It remains, nevertheless, a bone. You probably won't remember. But I do. Would you mind telling me why you told the girl who came to visit you that day in Paris—I have a hunch she was your sister—would you mind telling me why you informed her I was *drunk*?"

What is True & False in Science

Medawar and the Anatomy of Research — By ERNEST NAGEL

INTEREST in the nature of scientific inquiry has a history almost as long as that of theoretical science itself. However, the norms and techniques of research, like its detailed conclusions, have not been constant throughout the centuries; and it is hardly surprising that conceptions of its nature have also undergone change. Few today believe, for example, that the sciences can establish their theories as absolutely certain, though such a belief was once widely held even by eminent scientists. Moreover, the aims controlling analyses of science are often quite diverse. Some accounts try to describe scientific research as a temporal process by distinguishing in it various component activities and noting relations of sequential dependence between them. Others propose rules or general methods for rightly conducting scientific investigations. And still others deal with logical questions, for example with principles for assessing the validity of scientific explanations. These different accounts of science are directed to distinct though related questions, and are obviously not incompatible with one another. Confusion results, however, if the questions are not clearly distinguished, and if in particular statements of logical conditions that warranted conclusions of inquiry must supposedly satisfy are taken to describe how solutions to its problems are found.

It is a concern with the anatomy of research and some recurrent confusions about it, that ties together this collection of Professor Medawar's essays.[1] The book is not devoted exclusively to this subject. The eight papers in it were written for different occasions, and most of them are commentaries on separate topics that are only loosely related—among others, on Herbert Spencer's evolutionary philosophy, Darwin's prolonged illness, Koestler's analysis of creative thought, and Teilhard de Chardin's rhapsody on cosmic evolution. All the essays illuminate the various questions they discuss, and exhibit the literary grace, pungent wit, and uncommon good sense to which Dr. Medawar's readers have become accustomed. But despite the diversity of their specific themes, the essays all deal in one way or another with what he calls "the art of the soluble," with the kind of reasoning that leads to scientific discovery.

THE FOIL TO Dr. Medawar's discussion of the subject is the so-called "inductivist" account of science, often attributed to Francis Bacon. On this view as commonly portrayed, research begins with unbiased observation of particular occurrences, and finally derives general laws from the observed facts by following a few simple rules. Bacon was not quite as naïve as this conventional account suggests, and his rules

ERNEST NAGEL *is Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University and the author (with Morris R. Cohen) of* Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method *(1934), Sovereign Reason (1954), and* The Structure of Science *(1961).*

[1] *The Art of the Soluble.* By B. P. MEDAWAR. Methuen, 25s.

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or method for arriving at explanations of events seem less implausible if one assumes, as he did, that the phenomena of nature are analysable into a finite number of elementary "Forms." But however this may be, he did believe that he was in possession of a sure method for making scientific discoveries; and his directives for the conduct of inquiry (epecially in the version presented by John Stuart Mill) continue to be reflected in popular conceptions of science.

Bacon's ideas on scientific research were dismissed by his contemporary William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, with the derisive comment "He writes Philosophy like a Lord Chancellor." Since then, inductivist accounts have been so repeatedly and thoroughly exposed as mythical, that after surveying those criticisms Dr. Medawar seems inclined to exclude the term "induction" from serious philosophical discussions of science. Undoubtedly the basic error in those accounts is the assumption that inquiry starts with unprejudiced observations, and that to have preconceptions about the ways things hang together is a cardinal sin. For even when a scientist has formulated a definite problem for investigation —a task easier said than done—what observations or experiments should he make? The number of things he could observe is legion, even if he limits himself to matters accessible to the unaided senses, and he cannot attend to all of them. Accordingly, a piece of research cannot get under way until some conjectural hypothesis or explanation occurs to the scientist as a possible answer to his problem, a hypothesis that serves to define what facts are the relevant ones in the inquiry. Observation is therefore always selective, it is never completely innocent, and it is carried on within a framework of preconceptions that the scientist brings to his investigation. However, there are no rules for finding either significant problems or fertile hypotheses. Scientific theories are products of creative imagination—in Einstein's words, they are "free inventions of the human mind"—which may be suggested by experience but are not logically derivable from it. If the term "scientific method" is taken to denote directives for extracting explanations from observed facts, then as Dr. Medawar cogently argues there is no such thing as scientific method.

BUT IT IS NOT enough to think up possible explanations for the phenomena under study. If a proposed explanation is to count as something more than a fantasy, it must be tested, in part by confronting it with relevant observational findings. However, even the testing of a theory is only partly governed by precise directives, and does not guarantee its truth. For example, the full meaning of a theory, and therefore its compatibility with verifiable facts, can be ascertained only by making explicit its logical consequences. But though there are definite rules for checking the formal validity of a proposed proof for a supposed consequence of a theory, except in trivial cases there are no rules for finding its consequences—their discovery depends on the insight and good fortune of the scientist. Similarly, even when some deduction from the theory can be compared with observable facts, there are no rules for obtaining them, and rare ingenuity may be needed to devise experiments that will yield them. Moreover, though a theory may be compatible with the available experimental data, the data are never sufficient to establish the theory with guaranteed finality, and this for at least two reasons. It is impossible to show that some novel prediction drawn from a theory will be congruent with future observations. Secondly, since the available evidence may be compatible not only with a given theory but also with some alternative to it, the theory is not securely founded merely because it agrees with the evidence; and while the theory may perhaps be shown to be "better supported" than is a specified alternative to it,

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this cannot be shown for all possible alternatives. In short, even if a scientific explanation survives the critical testing to which it is subjected, its certain truth is not thereby assured.

It is this "hypothetico-deductive" model of scientific research, with its emphasis on the indispensable roles of imaginative anticipations of nature, deductive logic, and stringent but non-demonstrative testing procedures, that Dr. Medwar advances in opposition to inductivist accounts. Much that he says in presenting the model is generally familiar and no longer controversial; and indeed he acknowledges his debts to previous writers on the subject, in particular to Sir Karl Popper. But his discussion of it is fresh, perceptive, and replete with clarifying side excursions. For example, he makes some just criticisms of the opinion which attributes a special virtue to "pure" as distinct from applied research; he has acute observations on why it is that scientists seem to shirk the study of many admittedly important problems; and he offers an explanation (though to my mind it is over-simple) for the familiar concern of scientists with questions of priority in discovery. Nevertheless, I have some hesitations about Dr. Medawar's analysis of the anatomy of research. They have their source in a number of controversial views that are currently associated with the "hypothetico-deductive" model, although it is not entirely clear to what extent he subscribes to them. There is room for comment only on two of them.

DR. MEDAWAR APPARENTLY endorses Popper's claim that while no scientific theory can be conclusively established, theories are definitively refutable. Now there undoubtedly is a formal asymmetry between verifying and disproving universal statements. But it is an overstatement to maintain that theories are therefore conclusively falsifiable. For while a single instance that contradicts a theory does refute it, whether an apparently recalcitrant fact really is incompatible with the theory can often be decided only in the light of various assumptions which are accepted (in the context of a given investigation at any rate) as sound. For example, the "observed" value of the precession of Mercury's perihelion does not agree with the value recently calculated from the general theory of relativity. However, it is at present undecided whether this disagreement disproves the theory (even if the observed value is taken to be correct), since the calculated value is obtained from the theory with the help of special assumptions not all of which are currently regarded as firmly grounded. Accordingly, disproof of a hypothesis is contingent on the stability of the theories employed in interpreting matters of fact, so that the refutation of a proposed explanation may be no more definitive than is its verification. The supposition that theories are conclusively falsifiable is not integral to the "hypothetico-deductive" model, and is indeed hardly consistent with the stress the latter places on the presence of interpretations even in observation.

Recognition that theories in science cannot be established as certainly true, has led some proponents of the model also to maintain that research does not attempt to establish them even as "probable" or "reliable." A theory is tested, so it is claimed, to see whether it can be overthrown, rather than to find evidence for judging the extent to which its adoption is warranted. Accordingly, those who subscribe to this view dismiss as absurd the idea of a logic of induction —not only in the sense of rules for discovering hypotheses, but also in the quite different sense of logical principles for assessing the weight of the evidence for given hypotheses and for evaluating their probability. However, these claims are at best dubious. Even if one admits, as Dr. Medawar in a paraphrase of Popper seems to hold, that "the only act which the scientist can perform with complete logical certainty is the repudiation of what is false" (that is, the refutation of theories), it does not follow that only what is logically certain is properly knowledge. In science as in daily affairs, differences in the strength of support which hypotheses receive from the evidence for them are not only recognised, but are ignored only at one's peril. It is surely misleading to say, as Popper in effect does, that even after a hypothesis has stood up under critical testing, it is as much a "guess" as it was initially. The importance of having principles to evaluate evidence for hypotheses remains, whether or not such principles are given the label "inductive logic." Indeed, Dr. Medawar says as much when he observes that the *acceptance* of hypotheses depends on the authority of logic, though the point tends to be weakened if not obscured by his recurrent emphasis on research as the falsification of conjectures. In any event, an account of science which portrays it as being exclusively concerned with refuting proposed explanations, appears to be close to saying that the achievements of science consist simply in proving theories to be false. But after all, we have learned much about the ways of things through scientific inquiry. It is difficult to take at face value a conception of science according to which men are not better off in understanding the mechanics of nature than were their ancestors centuries ago.

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Yukio Mishima's Stories

Death in Midsummer, and Other Stories. By Yukio Mishima. Translated by various hands. *Secker & Warburg*, 30s.

Yukio Mishima, says the blurb, "is equally at home in the traditional and the modern aspects of Japanese life." Gaffers and gammers aside, nearly all Japanese are, I should say. Perhaps only the pronounced national self-consciousness, the habit of nervous self-contemplation, still keeps the old dichotomy of "traditional" and "modern" current. The theory that old and new are at war is naturally of considerable interest to the Japanese themselves, those inner tourists, as also to outsiders who are engaged in studying them, but whatever war may be raging in the Japanese breast amply predates the advent of modernity. In practice "traditional" and "modern" coexist quite comfortably most of the time. A friend of mine in Osaka, having done full justice to a Western-style dinner accompanied with Western-style drinks, would invariably insist on taking a mouthful of Japanese food and drink before ending the evening. I was reminded of him by Mishima's travelling businessman, in "Thermos Flasks," who was reading the San Francisco *Chronicle* in his hotel and "suddenly wanted to read something in Japanese and took out a letter that had come from his wife." If they are given the chance, the majority of Japanese will make the best of both worlds, like Mishima.

As a writer Mishima appears to make the best and sometimes the worst of a number of worlds. Though only in his early forties, he has published abundantly, and this collection of stories exhibits the variety we have seen in his novels and plays, as for instance between the fisherfolk idyll, *The Sound of Waves*, and the claustrophobic study in sexual inversion, *Confessions of a Mask*, or between the laboured and ludicrous nastiness of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* and the seemingly effortless but powerful and at times humorous *Five Modern Nō Plays*. In one of the latter a young poet exclaims indignantly, "The park, the lovers, the lampposts—do you think I'd use such vulgar material?" And an old woman replies, "In time it won't be vulgar. There's nothing that wasn't once vulgar. In time it'll change again." No material is vulgar to Mishima.

It is a far cry in externals, but perhaps not so very far otherwise, from "The Priest of Shiga Temple and His Love," where the Great Priest meets the Great Imperial Concubine and the Great Priest falls but the Great Imperial Concubine rises, to "Three Million Yen," which tells of a young married couple, prudent and almost priggish, who have planned their life in phases, each phase to be achieved as soon as their savings reach the prescribed level. The young man has no patience with the view of his coevals that life in contemporary Japan is hopeless and without meaning.

> He was not a person given to deep thinking, but he had an almost religious faith that if a man respected nature and was obedient to it, and if he but made an effort for himself, the way would somehow open. The first thing was reverence for nature, founded on connubial affection.

The two are great collectors of price-lists and have worked out exactly how much they will need to spend on powdered milk when they have their first baby. It turns out that the couple make their living by giving "exhibitions" in the homes of the well-to-do. As performers they are highly thought of; they have one notable qualification: they are in love. In a sense they are being obedient to nature, I suppose, and also making efforts for themselves.

"The Seven Bridges" concerns a superstition which involves praying on various bridges in the middle of the night; it will seem no odder to the foreign reader than to the native policeman who supposes the celebrant is intending to throw herself into the river. There are too many superstitions in the world for them all to gain admission into the grand category of the "traditional." The more respectably traditional turns up in "Onnagata," which is excellent in conveying the atmosphere of a Kabuki theatre and portraying a great actor of female parts, but tails off all too lazily: the Japanese "open end" is not inevitably a sign of spiritual distinction or superior aesthetic sensitivity. The author moves adroitly from the ancient stage to a modern drawing-room, and "The Pearl," a light-hearted variation on Maupassant's "La Parure," deals with the social embarrassments which the Japanese are able to embrangle themselves in at the drop of a cake-fork, but nonetheless points to a measure of samurai spirit in the middle-aged ladies attending the tea party.

A distinctly repellent item here is "Patriotism," concerning sex and *seppuku* (the act for which *harakiri* is an unsuitably vulgar term) and seemingly, despite the liveliness of the love-making, a straight-faced demonstration of the fantastic spiritual ambitiousness, almost arrogance, which has it that nothing in one's life becomes it as much as leaving it, and leaving it as painfully and messily as possible. Even so, the story does display Mishima's quite peculiar gift for representing in words—embodying would seem the right expression here—the experiences of the flesh. It is nicely offset by a very funny (and wholly un-Yeatsian) pseudo-Nō play,

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"Dōjōji," about a girl who doesn't kill herself, who "became reconciled to nature" (these kindly references to nature are rather reassuring!) and went off to have a good time instead. *Death in Midsummer* is strongly recommended to all who are interested in the Japanese and equally to all who are interested in short stories.

D. J. Enright

The Alternative Tradition

The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse. Chosen by JOHN MACQUEEN and TOM SCOTT. *Oxford University Press*, 45s.

THE EDITORS of this anthology rightly refer in their preface to its appearance in the great series of Oxford Books as rather belated. There has been a solid tradition of good poetry in the northern version of English which was at first called "Inglis" and only in the early 16th century christened by Gavin Douglas "Scots." Medieval Scots and medieval English are much more like each other than medieval Tuscan and the Provençal which Dante could read currently and include in Arnaut Daniel's speech in the *Purgatorio*. The medieval Scottish chronicle poems are, in fact, because of their plain, direct, almost bald diction probably much easier for an English schoolboy, if he were exposed to them, than Chaucer. Here is a sight translation of a passage, included in this anthology, from Blind Harry's "The Wallace":

. . . beholding his pale face,
He kissed him, and cried full oft: "Alas!
My best brother in world that ever I had!
My one-fold friend when I was hardest stead!
My hope, my health, thou wast in most honour!
My faith, my help, strengthiest in the stour!
In thee was wit, freedom, and hardiness;
In thee was truth, manhood, and nobleness;
In thee was rule, in thee was governance;
In thee was virtue withouten variance;
In thee was loyalty, in thee was great largesse;
In thee gentrice, in thee was steadfastness.
Thou wast great cause of winning of Scotland;
Though I began, and took the war in hand.
I vow to God, that has the world in wield,
Thy death shall be to Southerns dearly sold.
Martyr thou art for Scotland's right and me;
I shall thee venge, or else therefore to dee!

There is an elaborate early courtly love poem, King James I's "The Kingis Quhair"; but the verse chroniclers, who are more central and typical, have all this plain note of militant patriotism, avoiding ornament or riddling metaphors, using no rhetoric but the simplest verbal schemes (*"My hop, my heill . . . / My faith, my help"*) and they mirror a national consciousness intent, mainly, on surviving against the Plantagenets, in arms. There is a feeling of something crude but strong in its firm limitations, like *Le Chanson de Roland*. Yet, not much later than Blind Harry, Robert Henryson (a literary poet, not a minstrel) is writing in the art-language of a high civilisation, setting in the first stanza the tone, the mood, the emotional weather of a great poem, "The Testament of Cresseid":

Ane doolie season to ane careful dyte
Suld correspond and be equivalent.
Richt as it was when I began to wryte
This tragedie, the wedder richt fervent,
Quhen Aries, in middis of the Lent,
Schouris of haill can fra the north discend,
That scantlie fra the cauld I micht defend.

This tradition, at its height in Henryson, Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas, survived throughout the sixteenth century. The wretched Darnley and his peculiar son, King James VI, later King James I of England, both figure very respectably in this anthology. King James, in fact, is the author also of an excellent brief treatise on practical Scots poetics. As King of England, he took to writing in Southern English, and so did the Scots lords and gentry and learned men who followed him south. Scots became a vernacular, though one that could still be used by the gentry in ruefully wistful pastorals, like Sempill of Beltrees' lament for the piper, Habbie Simson:

Or wha will cause our shearers shear?
*What will bend up the brags of weir,**
Bring in the bells, or good play-meir**
In time of need?
Hab Simson could, what needs you speir?
But now he's dead.

This is the so-called Burns stanza, which Burns would have called "Standard Habbie," but which was not invented by Sempill either; it has medieval origins. It was, however, from vernacular poets like Sempill and from his own near contemporary, Robert Fergusson, that Burns derived (though he knew poems like "The Wallace" in modernised versions). The representation of Robert Burns here is large and comprehensive: songs coming out of folk-song, personal lyrical meditations, verse epistles, comic narrative, patriotic rhetoric ("Scots Wha Hae"). He emerges, for all the more sophisticated literary culture and more conscious art of Dunbar and Henryson, as the one Scottish world-poet. Walter Scott is also well repre-

* Names of tunes.

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sented, the dash if also the flim-flam of his romances, the ballad authenticity of "Proud Maisie" (how different from Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," turning objective ballad techniques towards a subjective expression of the "romantic agony"!). But the 19th century in Scotland after that is left blank, with some space at the end for the minor graceful gift of Stevenson, the clumsy piercing mimetic truth of John Davidson in one of T. S. Eliot's favourite poems, "Thirty Bob a Week." I would have liked a little token representation of sentimental recitation poems like "The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht" and of bold bawdry like "The Ball of Kirriemuir."

THE MODERN SECTION must have been most difficult to edit. Edwin Muir, who kept up a high and consistent standard of good writing in verse, and whose range of moods and topics was narrow, though his penetration was deep, must have been comparatively easy to anthologise. Hugh MacDiarmid, copious and uneven, coarse, impatient, ambitiously abstract and metaphysical, rancorous, sweetly lyrical, must have been much more difficult. For Muir everything that had happened after the Reformation was a disaster; Scott and Burns were "sham bards of a sham nation." MacDiarmid, in spite of his war-cry for the Scottish Renaissance ("Not Burns, but Dunbar!") is, like Burns himself, a *modern* poet, the heir of Calvinism and the Industrial Revolution, very Scottish in his unwillingness to distance his personality from the poem, to stand on his dignity (the English vice, Milton's for instance, of "keeping of state"). The poems chosen here at least bring the personality over—wit, bumptiousness, dash, tenderness, and spitefulness—and one longish poem, "The Great Wheel," lets us follow the cantankerous, zig-zagging movements of his unpredictable mind.

"But what's the meanin', what's the sense?"
"——Men shift but by experience,
'Twixt Scots there is nae difference.
They canna learn, sae canna move,
But stick for aye in their auld groove
——The only race in History who've
Bidden in the same category
Frae start to present o' their story,
And deem their ignorance their glory. . . ."

The selection of the other modern Scottish poets strikes me as very sound, and one is glad to welcome Kathleen Raine (who was brought up in Cumberland, which is always coming into the riding-raid ballads, and whose mother was Scottish) as an honorary Scot. Two neglected and excellent poets whom I was glad to see prominently featured are Hamish Henderson, whose *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica*, full of fire and life, have strangely escaped notice in the recent revival of interest in Second World War Poetry; and Robert Garioch, who writes the most natural Scots, completely unbookish, of any living Scottish poet, and who is the heir of Robert Fergusson as a humorous but piercing poet of Edinburgh town life.

Comparing the modern Scottish poets with their English contemporaries, I remembered the remark of an academic colleague that every time he crosses the border into Scotland he goes fifty years back in time, and likes it. Here are firm iambic metres, strict stanza forms, unashamed rhetoric, bold directness of general statement—and the poetry also, when it is visual, has its eye sharply on the actual external world: symbolism, imagism, free verse, Freud and Jung, concrete poetry might almost not exist. Scottish medieval poetry was in its full flower when the older modes in England were in confused decay. Something not dissimilar may be true here and now. We should not be time-snobs, or expect very different national cultures to be synchronous.

G. S. Fraser

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term

BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI

Preface by Valetta Malinowska

Introduction by Raymond Firth

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EAST & WEST

A Day in Berlin

GREY AND GREEN are the eastern guards' smart uniforms at Checkpoint Charlie. Grey and green too are their teeth, revealed now, presumably by order, in incongruous smiles of welcome. Their mouths open like bank-bags full of small change—nickel, lead, copper (surely not?) and other base metals—each mouth a dully glittering masterpiece of progressive dentistry. Was it not Marshal Rokossowsky's steel teeth which, when the Allies met at the end of the last War, spread alarm and despondency through the West?

The bus too is examined as a dentist examines a mouth. Large mirrors are wheeled underneath to inspect the cavities. Surely no one would be hanging on to a bus going from the West into East Berlin? Perhaps not: it is nonetheless part of the Wall-myth that, unless prevented, a stream of refugees from plutocracy would be pouring eastwards, drawn mothlike by some Marxist *ignis fatuus*.

Checkpoint Charlie—what an inane name for this cruellest of gates: one through which those who don't care may pass easily enough—indifferent officials, curious journalists like ourselves, tourists, military men about their routine business—and which is barred to those who passionately need it, to find freedom or some loved one.

Our eastern guide lady enters, small, round, Hampsteady, fussy, clucking and friendly. Jokes, it seems, are now permitted. Someone asks her if the mini-skirt has yet reached East Berlin. "Oh yes ha-ha-ha we have here also the mini-skirt yes ha-ha-ha all are wearing the mini-skirts now. . . ." She beams, challenging with nervous pride the West's vaunted monopoly of vanity, folly, and titillation: we too are human ha-ha-ha, she boldly implies. But alas, hardly a knee is later to be seen in East Berlin, not our own guide's knee, nor any others. Most of the population seem terribly old (the average age of Berliners in 1945 was 65, and it is still high now); and so are their clothes. They and what they wear seem alike—grey, tired, glum, hopeless—add adjectives to taste: they are all true. One suspects that mini-skirts, if worn, would reveal more varicose veins than fine thighs. There are a great many sticks, some white, and crutches about: a skull-faced man is pushed along by an old woman on a sort of home-made stretcher mounted on a pram-chassis.

The pot-holed streets are almost empty of traffic. An ambulance, hideously rusty, rattles along the broken chaussée, hooting at nothing. Strange improvised vehicles pop about, just as they did in Europe in 1944, propelled by mysterious and inefficient *ersatz* fuels. "Don't you know there's a war on?"—these minatory words, once part of our own lives, might serve still for the motto of East Berlin.

WE DRIVE ZIGZAGGING through shattered streets. Tall grim buildings rise now on either side. Often the sky is visible through the upper windows even of inhabited apartment blocks: the returning tide of humanity flows back, but peters out exhausted before it can reach its former level.

Vast empty spaces yawn unpredictably, sand and dust, the poor soil of Brandenburg naked once more, hummocks and hollows, scrubby bomb-site vegetation, pathetic gardens. Across the great waste where once stood the *Reichskanzlei* plods, bowed in an old mac, Hitler's true heir, the unknown German briefcase-carrier, just as he plodded in 1945, going God knows where: no miracles for him, no ogling Nitribitts or Erhards *dona ferentes*.

Our guide, still perky as ever, has by now relapsed almost entirely into the past tense: this was the Wilhelmstrasse, now the Otto-Grotewohl-Strasse, here were Embassies, here was the *Adlon*, there the *Kaiserhof*, here Goebbels' propaganda ministry, all gone. What deeds once were planned here, what cream cakes consumed, what orders and threats issued, what heels clicked, what dreams and nightmares given bureaucratic form: and all in vain! As the gay litany proceeds, grim clanking ghosts seem to testify of pride and its reward.

"And here on the left now you are seeing the *Reichstag* building, which was in 1933 by Goering burnt." Ho-hum. Not perhaps that it matters now.

Through gaps on the right can be seen at intervals the twin great shattered drums, now domeless, of von Gontard's baroque church-towers in the Gendarmenmarkt. We double back on our tracks, and suddenly Piranesi looms all around us. Here stands the *Französischer Dom*, where once Prussia's Huguenots worshipped, there the *Deutscher*, between them Schinkel's magnificent *Schauspielhaus*—all three still in the most desperate and appalling ruin. From a rutted, rubbish-strewn waste of sand and mud rise still the noble steps, the towering columns, rank on rank, Corinthian and Ionic, the huge pediments; but all broken and tottering, fire-blackened, here the bare brickwork showing through, there the empty heavens. Along the skylines some of the statues still

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posture crazily, Apollo and Pegasus of the strange company, mocked by the twisted roof-struts which soar, naked and purposeless, around them and by the sizeable tree which waves at their side.

THE EFFECT produced by this awesome spectacle is truly tragic: it evokes pity and terror. It has the essential elements of justice and inevitability: perishing by her own fault, Berlin reaps what she has sown. How can one not grieve for her, in the seed-time as in the terrible harvest?

East Berlin speaks of love betrayed and squandered. For love was lavished on this city: you can still see architectural traces of it everywhere, and it still sounds, however feebly and inanely, in the homesick songs which drool about the place—*Wenn wir uns wiedersehn im schönen Spree-Athen, Janz weit weg von Berlin, Ich hab so Heimweh nach dem Kurfürstendamm....* Perhaps it was never among the most beautiful of capitals: yet it did have, still has in a way, tremendous style, grandeur and character. Nering, Schlüter, von Gontard, Eosander von Göthe, Knobelsdorff—all these were great Baroque architects, and just enough of what they did in Berlin survives to prove it.

More characteristic still of Berlin are Langhans, who did the Brandenburg Gate, and above all Schinkel. These created early last century that severe, sober, and modest neo-Grecian style which is distinctively Prussian and still called so; which genuinely reflects the much-misused and now perhaps irrelevant yet still in retrospect admirable virtues which Treitschke celebrated in his *German History*; which must have made Berlin, before it swelled and became imperial rather than merely royal, before it burst out in the *Gründerzeit* into an explosion of inflated *Jugendstil, art nouveau* and worse, look for a bit like what it has always claimed to be: an Athens on the Spree. Fine: but how the statues, with which this style is copiously furnished, give it away! Those lips, forever parted in wild song, those staring sightless eyes, the streaming hair, the furious lop-sided romantic energy—through the Greek forms the *furor Teutonicus* bursts forth, expressing itself not in the serene animation of the south but in an irrepressible hysteria which is wholly northern.

Two wonderful bits of Schinkel (both restored) confront us now on the Unter den Linden and its continuation—the little *Neue Wache* and the long majestic *Altes Museum*. And here too, beneath the severe correctness of the style, can be discerned that ill-suppressed Gothic imagination which later carried Schinkel into bold experiment and which make him such an exciting stage designer, as witness what he did for *The Magic Flute*.

"AND HERE NOW we are in the Marx-Engels-Platz." Good God! We rub our eyes in wonder. Where on earth is Schlüter's rambling masterpiece, the old royal city-palace?

"In the war it is becoming a ruin," our guide brightly explains, "and now it has gone away." Gone away? We picture it, realising it has outstayed its welcome and is no longer required in a revolutionary age, picking itself up, dusting down all its courts and galleries and tramping off to some more congenial clime where the past is still respected and royal connections are matter more for pride than shame—to Estoril, perhaps, Montreux or Bordighera. Alas, it had no such luck. The massive walls survived the war; I saw them there 21 years ago; it could have been restored; far greater miracles have been performed; but the Russians blew it up; it joined in limbo all it had once housed and represented; the explosions shook the whole city, east and west; and nothing remains now, not a stone—except perhaps for one gateway built into a dismal new barrack-like block. Well is this void named after Marx and Engels: for here the state has indeed withered away, and how!

Poor, poor Berlin; forlorn, defiled, loved perhaps yet not loved enough; no open-city status claimed or granted for her; the sport in turn of one cruel fool after another; by Hitler staked and lost, by the Russians greedily seized and half-destroyed, as a drunken whore might burn or hack to bits the heirloom which a madman in his frenzy has surrendered to her. It had to be into the hands of the Russians that the old historical Berlin fell; Nemesis gave them, so to speak, Berlin's City and Westminster, and we have Hyde Park westwards. Let's be fair: they must have had more devastation on their plate than anyone could swiftly cope with; they had people to house as well as monuments to restore (and how they have housed them, in great inhuman cliff-like tenements which bring the Potala to the Spree); they have done a bit here and there—Knobelsdorff's *Opernhaus*, the University, St. Hedwig's, the baroque Arsenal, the *Prinzessinnenpalais*, all these have been painstakingly rehabilitated. Yet, granted all these things, would not the west have been a little kinder, a little less careless and irreverent, a little less arrogantly philistine and spitefully vengeful? Poor, poor Berlin....

STILL STUNNED, we totter later along the Kurfürstendamm. Night is kind to it. Behind the brave show of powder and paint one can no longer see the scarred, mutilated face,

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never lovely, now pathetic. In the puddles the bright lights, pride of the west, are doubled and dashed by gusts of wind into numberless dancing fragments. M. will take us to that disgusting place where all the women are really men. He knew it 20 years ago—surely it was here? But everything has changed so much. Without the trace of a snigger, the grave barman of the *English Pub* (Watney on the beer-handles but Berliner Kindl or the like in the barrel) helps us on our way and at last *Chez Nous* envelops us in its ambiguous, womblike embrace.

Behind the bar presides in the throbbing red darkness a gigantic androgyne, dressed in a black gown, richly ornamented with feathers and jewellery, crowned with a coiffure of improbable splendour, and credited by rumour with having walked all the way back from Stalingrad in high heels. He/she welcomes us with queenly warmth: "How charming of you to remember our humble home after all these years and"—waving a fan towards an indisputably male member of our party—"how delightful that you should have brought with you your *daughter*."

The gross indecency of the cabaret is redeemed by the fact that it is really funny in a sour, *schnodderig* sort of way; also by the extreme normality of the clientele, mostly nice young men with nice girls—yes, real girls, *janz bequem und nett*—and having a nice time, *danke sehr*. One forgets to shudder, to be prim or shocked. Suddenly it crosses the mind like a lightning flash—how sensible the Germans are to dress all these people up as women and set them to run night-clubs, which they do so well. In England we dress them up as men and they are much more nuisance. . . .

We are joined at the bar by a really dizzy ash blonde who has just done a strip on the stage. She—I mean he, really one has to pinch oneself—is poured into a tight dress of some glittering metallic substance.

"You must be English," he/she suddenly says in sniffy South London camp.

"Yes, indeed."

"What part of England?"

"London—I live in Putney."

"Well, really, it *is* a small world, I must say. I live in Putney too—my wife and family are there now."

A small world, certainly, and a strange one. From Berlin are departed captains and kings, Kaisers and *Führers*, might, majesty, dominion and power. Yet this humble home survives, dispensing its *louche* favours.

Shakespeare's tragedies do not end in unmitigated gloom. Practical people come on to shift the bodies, distribute the kingdoms and announce, LBJ-like, that life must go on. Wagner and Hitler had other and more vulgar ideas; but life defies them. Valhalla goes up in flames, yet for some reason the curtain refuses to fall. And as the smoke clears can be discerned in the ruins not gods or heroes, but the Baron, Mr. Norris and Herr Issyvoo.

Colin Welch

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Delhi

Between Anarchy & Freedom

WESTERN observers go wrong in two ways in their calculations about political stability in India, and theirs is a very ancient way of doing so, for it is that of the one-eyed deer. They are always apprehensive of one kind of anarchy, the kind they understand, but wholly blind to the possibility of another, which they do not. The contrast had better be set out more concretely.

For instance, the likelihood of chaos after the departure of the British in 1947 haunted the minds of many of these observers like a spectre, and they were inexpressibly relieved when after a short but intense spell of violence, which resulted only in the massacre of some half-a-million men and the ruin of about twenty million, the country settled down to orderly government under Nehru. A member of the Labour Government which claimed to have given independence to India voluntarily and thus demonstrated the power of free-will over determinism, said immediately after the disturbances that the average citizen of both India and Pakistan had not been involved in them, and in speaking about the loss of life and property a due sense of proportion was to be maintained, because what *had taken place* was a trifle compared with what *would have taken place* if British rule had continued. Thus in the years that followed it was triumphantly proclaimed that India was the only country in south Asia which had a stable government after the political transformations following the second World War.

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI, *born in Kishorganj in 1897, is the author of that remarkable exercise in personal candour,* The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian *(1951) and that heretical national self-criticism,* The Continent of Circe: An Essay on the Peoples of India *(1965).*

Again, the same observers were very nervous as to what would happen after the death of Nehru, and proportionately reassured by the smooth succession of Lal Bahadur Shastri. One high-placed but obviously simple-minded American declared that "After Nehru, who?" was no longer a question, what remained was the other query: "After Nehru, what?" All the friends of India were jubilant—even Nehru was not indispensable—Buddha seemed to have bequeathed his serenity to Indian politics.

Naturally, the croakers were derided. I, of course, was one of them, for as far back as 1953 I had written an article entitled "After Nehru, who?"—which I believe was the first discussion in print of the question in India—and in it I had said that after Nehru there was to be *nothing,* in the sense of *vide et néant.* The conditions were likely to be like the Buddhistic Nirvana minus its peace. I certainly thought that Nehru's death would remove all positive content from Indian politics.

While these fears arise and recede in the outside world with the ebb and flow of passing events, and generally leave behind a mood of complacence in all who do not have to bear the consequences, no Western observer gives serious or deep thought to the daily publication in the Indian newspapers of hard news of another kind—the unending reports of strikes, demonstrations, disturbances, shootings, and gassings.

Just as the public in India hold the record for futile political demonstrations of all kinds, their Government for its part is pre-eminent among all the Governments of the present-day world for an ineffectual recourse to violence, which in every case reduces the authority of the State instead of restoring it. Since the attainment of independence in 1947 the Government of India and the provincial Governments have, in their attempts to suppress popular aspirations or discontent, used violence on a scale and with a frequency which have not been rivalled even by the so-called unfree countries.

Foreign observers are coming to regard this state of affairs with as much indifference as they show towards the routine politics of any other country. What is not less significant is that even the people of India are getting used to the disturbed state as they get used to chronic disease even if it is cancer. The incidents have lost all novelty, and they seem to be as little news as is dog's biting of man.

IN ORDER TO GIVE some idea of the kind of experience which has confirmed in me the anticipation, already formed before independence, of a kind of very peculiar anarchy which was likely to be seen in India if the country had

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political independence, I need refer only to some of the police firing on mobs, curfews imposed, demonstrators burning buses, troops alerted, students holding up trains, teachers arrested, universities closed, deaths in riots, power plants attacked, tear-gas shells fired, etc., etc., large headlines which have appeared recently on the front page in the major Indian newspapers.

NATURALLY I try to find out what the outside world makes of such events. In private conversation with foreigners and with the Anglicised Hindus (who normally derive their ideas from foreigners or put forward explanations coloured by their interests), I normally hear two explanations—one very short-term, the other which takes a longer view but is not, to my thinking, long and deep enough.

The first explanation is that the disturbed state was due to the nearness of political elections. But even when rowdyism accompanies electioneering—and India has been remarkably free from it so far—it is seen only at the time of polling. The rivalries of political parties do not burst out in disturbances a year in advance of it, nor do they give rise to outbreaks on such a scale and with such frequency as is being seen in India today. On the face of it, the phenomenon looks more like a revolutionary movement, a series of sporadic insurrections.

Certainly, this conception would be more valid than the idea of excited electioneering. But the possibility of a revolution in India on the lines of the French, the Russian, and the Chinese, not to speak of the Japanese and the Turkish, that is to say, the possibility of a renovation and reconstruction of politics and life through a process of violent moulting, is non-existent. The genetic, social, and ideological forces which lead to a revolution in the modern sense are wholly absent in Hindu society, which for all practical purposes is Indian society. It is too old, and set in a pattern.

Therefore a realistic view of the present disturbed state of the country would tend to be that all these more or less barren upheavals are sub-rational, exasperated, and almost hysterical gestures coming out of a feeling of helplessness. The conditions cannot be improved by any rational course that the people have the mental energy to take, and yet they are unendurable.

If the situation is narrowed down to its purely political aspect, it will be seen that the disturbances, instead of being a movement aimed at the enjoyment of office by the Congress Party, are actually the product of a conviction, subconscious rather than conscious, that the party cannot be ousted by the power of the vote. Had there been any faith in future elections as a means of setting up a better government what one would have seen, or at all events expected on rational calculations, should have been a day-to-day and door-to-door canvassing against the Congress for the time being. But even those who are completely alienated from the Congress Party do not think that there is any alternative to it, so far as voting goes. The votes seem to be predetermined in favour of the Congress. Yet the badness of the Party is felt so strongly that the people cannot refrain from giving a wholly aimless and at the same time irrepressible expression of resentment.

THE SECOND EXPLANATION attributes the disturbances to incitement by the Communists and other Leftists. The ruling Party naturally has everything to gain by propagating this idea. The Communist bogey is its strongest weapon to frighten the Western Powers (and especially the United States) into supporting the Congress.

There is no doubt that the Communists, such as they are in India, are making every effort to exploit the discontent and the insurrectionary mood in the country. But it must also be pointed out that the Indian Communists are divided—and those among them who are called "Right Communists" have already written themselves off as revolutionaries. They are just Hindu Chauvinists with a Communistic suffix. The other wing, which is called Left, is too feeble to be able to take advantage of a spontaneous dissolution of political organisation like the Bolshevists.

In respect of political agitation Western observers always miscalculate in India because of their own capacity for organisation and bent for it. They think that passion cannot exist without the will. So they always mistake spontaneous combustion in this country for organised incendiarism. The British in dealing with the nationalist movement attributed far greater organisation to it than it ever possessed.

The real truth is that the Indian people, whose extrordinary individualism in behaviour is matched by an equally extraordinary collectivism in excitement and passion, create an impression of organised action when they are only driven in a herd by a shared passion. That they are generally passive does not affect their inflammability. Everyone knows how cotton, which is only inert cellulose, self-ignites when tightly packed in the hold of a ship. Once a good deal of Bombay was blown up by an explosion produced by smouldering cotton in a ship carrying ammunition. In observing the

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political field in India one should always be ready to recognise the possibility of completely aimless violence.

The professional politicians try to take advantage of such situations, but most often they only trail behind the disturbances. Varying the simile, one might say that while the people of India are like herrings following the Gulf-stream, the politicians are like the porpoises which follow in their wake. Unfortunately, when the British left India they took the porpoises for the leaders of the herrings, and gave undeserved political power to them. That confusion has produced its natural result. Though the porpoises have eaten some herrings, the latter have a disconcerting way of maintaining their own way and getting back at their exploiters.

ALL THIS, I suppose, already foreshadows my formal diagnosis of the contemporary political situation in India. To make no mystery of it, it is the renewed self-assertion, the reappearance on the surface, of the spontaneous anarchy which is always latent in Hindu society but is kept repressed as long as the power of a ruling order retains its strength. This ruling order, since the ancient Hindu Kshatriya or warrior order disappeared, has always been foreign. Not one single foreign ruling order stood up to the wear and tear for a very long time. The mere end of British rule could not create a native political power out of the existing human element. There were periods of anarchy during Muslim rule, and in its latest stage British rule exhibited such an exhaustion that the last days of the Raj had all the appearance of dithering senility.

The force which works against political organisation in India is not any kind of motive power, but inertia, which is basically a product of the climate, and arising out of the operation of that factor has become fixed in behaviour and outlook. It asserts itself whenever the adventitious political energy is spent up. Thus the conflict between the energy and the inertia gives to the political history of India alternating cycles of winding up and running down, of imperial régimes and imperial interregnums.

We are in for one of these interregnums at this moment, with its familiar accompaniment, the reassertion of the inertia. In this process, had there been no resistance to it, our society would have quietly and uneventfully settled down to an amorphous life. But the survival from the British epoch of a State which has not as yet lost all its power is offering enough friction to produce both heat and sparks. So long as Nehru lived his great authority kept the State more or less immune to the inertia, so that the drift towards anarchy, which was already under way, was not perceived on the surface. His death has removed that resistance to the drift. As a result, it is acquiring an accelerated momentum, but the full acceleration is still to come. What is psychologically upsetting is not the phenomenon itself, but the sudden giving way. Whatever people might say about the dispensability of individuals, even a daughter is no adequate substitute for a father.

I AM AWARE that two objections can at once be brought forward against this view of the Indian situation: first, that it is too far-fetched and that it lacks actuality; secondly, that the disturbances can be explained more obviously by referring them to the prevalent economic distress. I shall try to answer both the objections.

The impression of far-fetchedness is likely to be given by the simplicity and timelessness of the explanation, and its apparent deductive character. All these are repugnant to the contemporary Western mind, with its overspun intellectualism and passional shallowness. That sort of outlook is perfectly suited to the silver age of a civilisation. But it would not suit a people as stark, as primitive at bottom, and as elemental as we Hindus are. Sophistication, or for that matter even rationalism, is only a patina on our life, and it is often and easily rubbed off. Therefore in dealing with India a simple explanation is always to be preferred to a complicated one.

But even Indians, when they have acquired a Western education, show this reluctance to come to grips with the elemental in our life. Whenever I put forward one of my straightforward views I see the superior smile and hear the barely polite remark: "It is not as simple as that." The readiness to make straight things crooked is an intellectual disease which modern Indians have contracted from the West to tie themselves up in any number of Gordian knots.

Certainly all of them admit of Alexander's solution. It is all very well to have such exclamations as *très simpliste et peu nuancé* at hand for the West, but when uttered in India they are no better than frippery, the sound-effect of intellectual dandyism. Besides being elemental, Indian life today is also intensely tragic, and it is not to be understood by anybody who has no feeling for tragedy. It calls for moods and sympathies which can deal with characters on a scale larger than those one meets at cocktail parties or even in those ultra-modern talking parlours—the seminars (what a descent from the salons of the *grandes dames*!). For sheer gratuitous vapidness a recent "Round Table" on Nehru organised by UNESCO could

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not be matched from the palaver of any age or any country. I am of the opinion that in order to induce the proper mood for approaching Indian problems, a previous reading of *Prometheus Bound* or *Frankenstein* is likely to be of far greater use than a whole library of books on politics and economics.

THE SECOND OBJECTION has greater apparent force, because there is undoubted economic distress in India today, and it is both acute and widespread. But this cause of the disturbances, real as it is, is also a cause at one remove, for the distress itself has been created by the inertia. This inertia is paralysing the governmental machinery on the one hand, and the effort of the people on the other. It is this creeping paralysis on both sides which is creating the distress. Therefore the primary factor in the present disturbed state of India is not that, but what stands behind it, namely, the inertia.

BEFORE considering the stranglehold of this Old Man of the Sea it is necessary, however, to understand his character. This is all the more needed because of the very paradoxical position I am taking: that inertia can create disturbances. But when I have explained the connection it will perhaps be admitted that though its fundamental attribute is passivity, inertia is also able to provoke an equal and corresponding reaction. Or rather, it becomes a positive force in itself.

The basic manifestation of the inertia in Indian life is seen in an unconquerable revulsion from everything that involves physical or mental exertion, and its natural tendency is to favour relaxation at the expense of toning up. In the phase of inertia all work is thus regarded as an evil, and organisation, co-ordination, order, and punctuality are correlated evils. This hostility to effort is accompanied by an obstinate disbelief in improvement, which even if it were within reach is not considered worth the trouble in bringing it about.

To all appearance, the Hindu's unrelenting pursuit of money would seem to contradict this assumption regarding his inactivity. But in actual fact it is also evidence for the theory, because the energy that the Hindu shows in acquiring money is produced by the impulse of a sub-rational urge which is independent of his will, and which his will cannot curb. It is due to his incapacity for self-discipline. There are other weaknesses which show the same failure. When the sordid greed for money leaves him any freedom, the Hindu succumbs with equal abandon to debauchery and drunkenness. I hardly meet a fellow Hindu who began to drink out of a desire to be modern and Western, who did not end up with alcoholism. No, the inertia asserts itself even in those activities of the Hindus which seem to be positive. The will can do nothing.

If this natural inertia had been left unopposed it would have made us slide down to our proper level. We Hindus would have become lotus-eaters without their poetry. We should have been very drab lotus-eaters. Coming down to the actual world, I might say that we *Hindu* Indians differ from the *South American* Indians in wanting to laze, not in the company of macaws, marmosets, and humming birds, but among jackals, vultures, and flies. It is a dour, sullen, and squalid form of idleness that is natural to us, and we submit to it like predestined sluggards.

But no society can be wholly wanting in human groups or individuals which can be active, and in recent centuries such elements in India have been its foreign rulers. Their presence always makes for trouble, because it transforms the process of passive stepping down to less organised states into an active revolt against attempts to get work by means of coercion. Then the propensity to be idle exhibits a ferocity and fanaticism which is wholly unexpected in a negative phenomenon. But anyone who has pondered over the difference between the two forms of European anarchical doctrine, namely, those of Kropotkin and of Bakunin, will not find it impossible to believe that the Hindu inertia, too, can assume two forms: one benign and the other malignant. What we are seeing in India today is the malignant inertia.

THE FEUD is ever present in Indian life. It is always simmering in social and family life, and its commonest and most continuous form is to be seen in our family relations. These are a war between the elders and the young, with the children always disobeying and going their own way, and the parents or guardians always nagging, beating, and throwing in the sponge. The disposition which makes for this family anarchy was very neatly summed up by Kipling in the dictum he put in the mouth of his cockney private:

> *The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;*
> *'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own....*

It is this pattern of family behaviour which is now extending itself to the public sphere, and, above all, to Indian politics. Furthermore, since the attempts to impose authority are more energetic relatively speaking, the resistance to them is also more excited. Even in the British

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days when the Government's power to coerce the people of India was irresistible and not trammelled by the vote of the masses, nothing was more resented than the compulsion to put in work and submit to discipline. One might say that at least half of the hatred for British rule was the product of this chafing. The grievance, instead of being removed by political independence, has, on the contrary, been heightened by it: the Indian people who wanted to be freed from the slavery to work and system, find that there is the same insistence on both in a more clamorous but powerless form. This only draws contempt on the new Indian régime, without any lessening of the irritation.

THERE is no doubt that the growing anarchy, both passive and active, which is so obvious in India today, is to be set down primarily to disinclination for work and impatience of discipline, both of which are ineradicable. The two groups of malcontents which are the most assertive of all bear witness to this unequivocally. Labour in India, as every employer knows only too well, has almost come to the point when it will demand, not simply "From each according to his abilities, and to each according to his needs," but something more one-sided: "From each nothing, and to each according to his desire."

The Government, which on account of the universal franchise is abjectly dependent on the votes of the workers, is virtually helpless before this attitude. I shall refer only to one excuse in support of this statement. The authorities are always pleading in extenuation of the slow economic transformation of the country that they are trying to carry it out by democratic methods, and not by the brutal coercive methods employed by the Russians and the Chinese. In what other country in the world is hard work to improve the standard of living considered undemocratic?

Even the Indian peasant, who always was a patient and untiring worker, is catching the contagion. Of course, he cannot stop work for higher wages, but he can save himself labour by not tilling. The food shortage which it has become the fashion to attribute to over-population or, not to put too fine a point on it, to the addiction of the Hindu to continuous and bestial sexual intercourse without the saving grace of contraceptives urged on them by the Americans, is, if anything, a result of underproduction. The peasant will not work at his accustomed intensity, and agriculture is the most exacting economic activity in the world. I sometimes employ peasant boys as servants in my house, and I ask them why they have come away from their villages. The uniform reply I get is that *Kheti-ka Kam,* the work of tilling the fields, is too laborious. Even the Jat peasant around Delhi, noted through the ages for his industry, is looking forward to becoming a peon, so that he might sit still on a stool at the door of his sedentary bureaucratic superior.

It is the same with the students. They want to pass examinations without studying, and this unreasonable aspiration has been aggravated by an absurd stand taken by the Government in respect of purely academic qualifications for employment. The employers insist on university degrees even for minor posts, such as that of a typist, but they do not demand skill or efficiency afterwards. So, what the students see is that people are getting salaries on the strength of chits without knowing the work, and so they demand the same *chiffon de papier* without the requirement to swot for it. This is nothing more than a demand for parity, or economic equality. Why should the elders and the young have different positions in the eye of economics?

WHAT THIS deep-seated hostility to work and organisation would have led to, if it had been allowed to have unobstructed play, would have been a gradual sinking to the level of effort natural to the human organism in India and to a standard of living commensurate with it. And no great harm would have come out of it except that a large human group would have lived a primitive life with a primitive sort of happiness. Certainly, even at that level the scientific technique of living to the point to which it was assimilable in India would not have been absent. But the Indian State for different reasons is obstructing this process, and it is this which is creating the friction between the people and the Government. One knows what happens to the skin of the hand when it grips a rope dragged round a pulley by a tremendous weight.

The Indian State, such as it is, is contributing to the anarchy in both the aspects it has assumed in the eye of the people. In the first, it is an inefficient and almost effete administrative machine whose paralysis is all too evident. Local administration which was the strongest feature of British rule has virtually gone to pieces. The District Magistrates in India were once like Roman Senators; they are now hardly better than subordinates of the local Congress bosses.

The private citizen can no longer expect redress for any wrong from any governmental agency if he is oppressed by a local bully. The normal protection given by an administration

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is never available. In many places blackmail to be allowed to live in peace has become a common practice, a form of taxation. Untraced murders are becoming increasingly frequent. The public utilities like the post and telegraph, and in the big cities water supply and electricity, have become wholly undependable. The breakdowns are daily occurrences. In recent years the water supply for the whole city of Delhi, with a population of over two million, was completely stopped for days.

But while this paralysis is growing, the State has become an interfering busybody, and is trying to control even the smallest concerns of the people, affecting their economic life. This interference is the result of an imitative *étatisme*, and it is reaching a point where it has become intolerable. The people cannot get things done by the Government, and yet are unable to help themselves in their own way.

State interference in the general life of the people would in any case have been resented in India, for Hindu society is an individualistic society, given to a form of *laissez-faire* which has had no parallel in the West. The Hindus have always distrusted the State as an external, exploitative agency, and sought to have done with it by paying it its quit-rent, which sometimes amounted to the hecatomb demanded by the Minotaur. But they have always set a limit to the sacrifice, and are not prepared to see the Minotaur outside its labyrinth.

Apart from its inefficiency, the State has become the agency of self-aggrandisement of a small oligarchy, both political and financial. All this would naturally incite to revolt against the State, and its obvious weakness is further incitement.

There is no reason to fear that the victory of anarchy will have any harmful effect on the existence of the Indian people as a whole, except that it will arrest the "development" which the Western Powers are trying to impose on them. Not to speak of survival alone, perhaps it could even be added that the anarchy will not threaten a sort of "basic civilisation" for Indians. In this country these things have been protected and maintained, not by the State which as I have said has normally been an external agency in the life of the people (and a very ephemeral agency at that), but by society as a whole, which has taken over even the administration of law and enforcement of order. Perhaps to compensate for their political incapacity, the Hindus have always displayed an extraordinary power in social coercion.

BUT THE ANTICIPATION I am offering of the victory of anarchy in India has one basic flaw. It is the assumption that the future political and economic evolution of India is going to be wholly determined by the domestic forces and human groups of the country: that India can be self-contained. That certainly is wrong. So, even in making calculations on the basis of the forces and human elements present within the country, I have to take account of the possibility that the interests and the impingement of outside countries may alter the whole course of events.

That is all the more likely because the internal anarchy in India is creating an extensive area of low political and economic pressure which the outside world cannot just ignore. So, a more realistic discussion of the current situation in India should try to determine when the low pressure will bring in the cyclone from outside. But the data for the determination of that contingency are so uncertain that I have not hesitated to narrow down the inquiry to the framework within which the operation of the forces is fairly clear. The mere realisation of the hypothetical possibility might bring about a change of attitude to the situation in India.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

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PRESS

Libel & the Truth

"Let it be impressed upon your minds, let it be instilled into your children that the liberty of the press is the palladium of all the civil, political and religious rights of an Englishman."
THE LETTERS OF JUNIUS (*1770*)

"The idea of enlarging the freedoms of the press fills anyone in public life with despondency if not with alarm." BARONESS GAITSKELL
(*House of Lords, May 1966*)

SINCE LORD SHAWCROSS wrote on the Press and the Law in ENCOUNTER [March, 1966] it has become only too clear that it is Lady Gaitskell and not Junius who now most nearly represents the current attitude of the Establishment in this matter. In the House of Lords debate only two speakers, Lord Tangley (a member of the working party set up by JUSTICE and the International Press Institute of which Lord Shawcross was Chairman) who opened, and myself, had a good word to say for a defence of qualified privilege in libel actions where a newspaper could show that it had acted in good faith after careful inquiry in a matter of public interest and had published, on request, a reasonable letter or statement by way of explanation or contradiction.

Even Lord Thomson of Fleet, although concerned that the press should have greater protection in some matters, notably in the publication of foreign parliamentary and judicial proceedings, was unwilling to risk controversy by doing more than leave open the case for qualified privilege. As for the rest of the peers they were Gaitskellites to a man. None was more so than the Prime Minister's favourite lawyer, Lord Goodman, Chairman (and a very good one) of the Arts Council and the most astute libel settler in London according to the Lord Chancellor. He actually thought that the law on fair comment already went too far. As for the Lord Chancellor himself, he made it quite clear (*a*) that the Government had no intention of finding legislative time for a reform of the libel laws, and (*b*) that he personally was against the idea of qualified privilege.

This may well have pleased Sir Linton Andrews [ENCOUNTER, July 1966], although no doubt it disturbed Lord Shawcross. For one of the more piquant aspects of the discussion in ENCOUNTER so far is that it is the lawyer who would make it easier for the press to get on with what Delange of *The Times* declared a century and a half ago to be its proper business, that of disclosure, and it is the ex-Editor of the *Yorkshire Post* who has doubts. This is not as surprising as it might seem. In such matters as libel, the more important provincial newspaper editors tend to live sheltered lives. The more important the more sheltered. They have a kind of aldermanic status. They speak for the best elements in their society. Only rarely, if ever, do they find themselves down among the blood and the heat where the libel actions grow.

Although his anxiety lest the innocent should be hurt does him credit, I doubt however if Sir Linton speaks for most journalists in opposing qualified privilege. Nor is it just the professional muck-rakers who are against him. *The Times* is on the other side. So is the *Daily Telegraph*. Stating the case for qualified privilege after the Lords debate *The Times* argued emphatically that without it newspapers were restricted in the printing of "information that is of genuine and general public interest"; the *Daily Telegraph* that it was not the rights of journalists that suffered but "their professional functions . . . and it is on the efficient performance of these functions that the health of public opinion and the competence of Government fairly depends."

I agree with *The Times*, the *Telegraph*, and Lord Shawcross. But I have little doubt that Lady Gaitskell and Sir Linton have the great body of public opinion on their side. The case for altering the law of libel—not, let me emphasise, in the private interests of newspapers but in the public interest—is plain and simple. It has been put by Lord Shawcross in ENCOUNTER and elsewhere with the force and lucidity one expects of him and there is no need to repeat it. The counter argument, to which Sir Linton Andrews, Lady Gaitskell, the Lord Chancellor and most establishment-minded people give support is that if newspapers were allowed this defence they would be much less careful about making allegations, many of which the court might subsequently decide were unfounded. But before advancing a defence of quali-

LORD FRANCIS-WILLIAMS' *books include* Dangerous Estate: The Anatomy of Newspapers (*1957*) *and a biography of Clement Attlee* (*1961*). *He has been Editor of the* Daily Herald, *wartime controller of news and censorship, a Public Relations Adviser to Prime Minister Attlee, and a Governor of the B.B.C.*

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fied privilege a newspaper would have had to show itself ready to publish an explanation from the person criticised and apologise and retract if mistaken—a considerable protection one would have thought to the innocent and a considerable deterrent to the irresponsible newspaper. Nevertheless it can be argued that even so an innocent victim might suffer in order than an innocent libeller should be protected. This, say those who are against qualified privilege, is wrong. So wrong that it outweighs any possible public advantage from the greater freedom given to newspapers to expose genuine cases of public wrong-doing.

"*Libellous*"

New York

IN THE LATE *1800s, when polygamy was considered a national threat, it was libel to call a person a "Mormon." During the Golden Age at the turn of the century "anarchist" became libellous, and "socialist" was declared libellous shortly after the Russian Revolution.*

In the South during the 1930s it became libellous to print that a white man was "coloured," and in New York it was libellous to print that a kosher butcher sold bacon.

During the McCarthy era of the 1950s it became libellous to call a person a Communist sympathiser, and last year an Ohio court declared it libellous to call a Negro an "Uncle Tom." (The State Supreme Court reversed this one, feeling it was no slur.)

Last week, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia added a new sign of the times in libel law. It declared libellous a statement that a white merchant in predominantly Negro Washington appeared to be a "bigot."

At issue was an article by C. Sumner Stone, then editor of The Washington Afro-American, *and now an aide to New York Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. Eli Jaffee, proprietor of a pharmacy, stopped selling the Negro newspaper after complaining that its headlines and policies were causing racial mistrust and ill feeling.*

Mr. Stone responded with an article which said Mr. Jaffee "would appear to be a bigot" because he cancelled the Afro-American.

A jury found the statement libellous and awarded Mr. Jaffee $500 in damages although there was no proof that his business had been affected.

The Court of Appeals upheld the award, 5 to 3, saying Mr. Jaffee's reputation must be vindicated because he was falsely said to be "a bigot, racially prejudiced, and scornful of the Negro race."

NEW YORK TIMES

LET ME HERE MAKE one thing plain. There is no doubt at all that the press is often inhibited by the present state of the law from publishing matters which the public should know. My mind goes back to the series of financial frauds in the inter-war years of which the best remembered are the Hatry and Kruger crashes, although there were many others. I was a Financial Editor at that time. On several occasions during this period I became satisfied—as I am sure other Financial Editors must have been—that there were grounds for the deepest suspicion about some of the things being done and that the public ought to be warned.

My suspicions were supported by careful investigations in London, New York, Paris and other centres, made on my behalf by chartered accountants and others with special experience. Again and again I sought to publish specific warnings based on these investigations. Again and again my newspaper was told by its legal advisers that although they themselves were satisfied that the criticisms I had to make and the charges I brought were strongly based, nevertheless in their opinion specific charges, or even general ones which might be held to point to one man or group of men, would almost certainly be followed by libel actions and that in the then state of the law it might well prove impossible to produce documentary and other evidence (much of it in the nature of things hidden in the private records of the individuals and companies concerned) which would legally justify our warnings. They added, quite properly, that, in view of the position and wealth of some of those involved, if we lost, damages might be crippling.

I think they were sometimes too cautious. It is in the nature of legal advisers to be so. Indeed, in one case in which I felt so strongly that I insisted on publication despite legal advice to the contrary, with the result that the legal adviser concerned resigned in a huff, no action followed. By that time, however, the ice was already so thin and the writing on the wall so clear that it would have taken a very bold fraudulent financier indeed to risk going into court. By that time, also, most of the damage had been done. Although in due course there were arrests and criminal proceedings they came too late to save many thousands of investors from serious loss and the reputation of the City from great damage.

I GIVE THIS as only one example. There have been many others. Of course there must be a balance between the public and the private interest, between the need of the public to know and the possibility that the innocent individual may suffer—although I do not believe

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that with the safeguard of the requirement to publish an explanation and refutation and make apology if the criticism were shown to be misjudged damage done to the innocent would be either considerable or lasting. Qualified privilege is not an open sesame for the irresponsible. It is a safeguard for the responsible for it must be remembered that under the proposals now put forward the decision as to whether the defendant acted responsibly and should be permitted to plead qualified privilege would depend not on his say-so but on that of the court.

Of course there is a balance of advantage and disadvantage. There always is. The powers given to the police to maintain law and order although accepted as socially necessary can be, and sometimes have been, abused—indeed an instance of such abuse in Sheffield might never have come to light but for the activities of journalists. The absolute privilege enjoyed by proceedings in Parliament is a very different and much more far-reaching matter than the qualified privilege suggested for newspapers. It is an absolute bar to legal proceedings whereas qualified privilege is simply a plea that it is suggested the defence might in certain clearly defined circumstances be allowed to put forward with the agreement of the Court if legal proceedings are taken. Yet Parliamentary privilege is universally accepted as necessary to the proper functioning of representative government although it can lead, and sometimes has led, to damage to an individual's reputation without real justification. One could go on. But only the anarchist (and I hasten to add that I know some very respectable anarchists) denies that where the public interest and what may turn out to be a private one conflict, the public interest must prevail. And even the anarchist only does so because he believes that if not interfered with the sum of private interests will turn out to be the public interest.

We constantly make decisions that what is judged to be in the public interest must prevail even although it may sometimes bear hardly on individuals. We have to do so if social living is to be possible at all. If we did not we would ban all motor transport on the roads because motor cars sometimes kill people.

Here let me make one interjection. In the Lords debate on this matter last year I was asked by an ex-Lord Chancellor, Viscount Dilhorne, whether if a defence of qualified privilege were put forward by a newspaper I would agree that it should be required to disclose its sources. I said yes. Despite my sympathy for the imprisoned reporters in the Vassall affair —in which, of course, no such defence was permitted—I do not think this can be denied. I think a newspaper would have to make the choice. If it could not get clearance from its informants and felt that to disclose its sources would be a breach of confidence—and such cases would arise—then it would have to eschew a plea of qualified privilege and fight the case as best it could without it, although it would, no doubt, explain why it was not putting forward such a defence. It could not in my view claim qualified privilege on the grounds that it had said what it had only after full enquiry and on the basis of what it believed to be reliable evidence unless it was prepared to disclose what this evidence was and why it believed it to be reliable.

That being said the question remains whether the public interest and not simply that of newspapers does arise in this matter. Here I should say that I disagree entirely with both Sir Linton Andrews and Lord Shawcross on one thing. I do not accept their view that libel decisions should be left to judges not juries. I agree with Lord Dilhorne—I do not often do so. I think it right for the protection of the individual that he should have this kind of case tried before a jury and that it would be absolutely wrong to take away from the jury an issue which is of just the kind that a jury should determine, the issue of malice where there is a defence of fair comment or qualified privilege.

Of course juries are affected by the climate of the times. But so are judges. Anyone who thinks they are not should look at the decisions they made in those famous trade union cases, Taff Vale and Osborne. The law does not exist in a social vacuum. But juries are likely to reflect the climate of the times more faithfully and more comprehensively than judges do in such matters as these, if only because they represent a more complete cross-section of society and are closer to the passions and emotions, and, no doubt, the prejudices of ordinary people. They are of course for the most part too middle-aged and too middle-class. But judges are even more so. In the quotation with which I opened, Junius went on to say

> ... and the right of juries to return a general verdict in all cases whatsoever is an essential part of our constitution, not to be controlled or limited by judges nor in any shape questionable by the legislature.

I go along with him in that. He had reason to be grateful to the jury system. So have we all. Where a question of the public interest is at stake it is right that the public represented by twelve of its own kind should decide.

Of course juries have sometimes given excessive damages—although not so often as is sometimes suggested. The climate of popular opinion

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which was for some years very adverse to newspapers—not without reason in view of the way some of them behaved—sometimes carried them away. But in the most notorious case, the Lewis case, both the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords said the damages were excessive and the case was sent back for re-trial. That, of course, was a very cumbersome and costly procedure. And there are strong arguments for giving the Court of Appeal power to interfere in the award of damages where they think them to be clearly excessive without having to send the case back. But beyond that I would not interfere with juries. They have been and still are a strong bastion of British liberties, including the liberty of the press.

HOWEVER it is the issue of the public interest and whether the partial protection that would be given to newspapers by a defence of qualified privilege is or is not justifiable in terms of this interest that matters. It can scarcely be denied that there is a need for public watchdogs at a time when centralised power is increasing at all levels and is pretty certain to go on increasing, and where the effective ability of the individual to find out why what is going on is going on, and do something about it if he thinks it ought not to, is steadily diminishing.

This is the age of the cover up. An army of public relations experts burnishes the images public and private corporations wish to present of themselves. The Civil Service grows in secrecy as it grows in power. Any attempt to breach that secrecy brings sharp and monolithic retribution as Anthony Howard and the *Sunday Times* found when they attempted to go "where power lies" and open up the Whitehall beat. It is constantly made easier for the press to get the news the powerful want it to have, more and more difficult to get the news they would prefer it not to get. Guarded by the twin towers of the Official Secrets Act and the libel laws a good deal of the public domain in Britain is much less public than in most other politically advanced countries. It is a good deal less so for example than in the United States where there is no Official Secrets Act and, *pace* Mr. Harold Wilson, no D Notice system, and where the decision of the Supreme Court in the *New York Times* v. *Sullivan* case has made it plain that only in the event of proven malice can a public person hope successfully to sue for libel even if the charges made against him include errors of fact. And it is considerably less so than it was here a century ago despite all the public relations men who now hold out their glad hands on the drawbridge with guided tours on offer.

It is improbable, to be sure, that the defences often hide corruption. What is usually sheltered is inefficiency, which can sometimes do even more damage. And in the shadows thrown by these protections built by the publicly and privately important against the inquisitive a good deal of corruption by lesser men can and does from time to time flourish undetected—or at any rate uncaught—by the police.

Sir Linton Andrews mentioned *The People*'s exposure of bribery among professional footballers. This was suspected—one might even put it stronger and say known—to the police a long time before. They tried to get enough evidence on which to act but could not. *The People* was able to do so because it could spend a good deal more money than the police, some of it in ways the police could not have done. It was after a good story, of course. But it served the public interest in the process. It was only able to do so because it had an Editor of great courage and experience in such matters who had the confidence of rich and powerful proprietors who had been convinced that it paid to give him his head by a remarkable rise in circulation over a long period. And also because some of the people involved could be persuaded to confess and their confessions could be used to force others to admit the truth.

There are, however, many instances where such circumstances do not exist. There are frauds where the possibilities of securing confessions do not exist. There are smaller papers that cannot afford either the methods *The People* employed or the risks of libel it was prepared to face. There are local papers vulnerable to libel threats because of their comparative lack of financial resources if they seek to disclose local racketeers; trade papers vulnerable for the same reason however anxious they may be to ensure that the trades and industries with which they are concerned are run by honest and reputable people and that the occasional crook shall not get away with it. They know but they dare not print—and the public interest suffers.

OF COURSE WHAT IS implicit in Sir Linton Andrews' case against qualified privilege and was much more than implicit in much that was said in the House of Lords is the belief that *newspapers cannot be trusted*: that they would regard a change in the law as an invitation to do what they chose and libel whom they pleased.

I think this is to misunderstand the nature of qualified privilege and the safeguards that would exist against its abuse. But for the sus-

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picions harboured against newspapers, the newspapers—or some of them—have only themselves to blame. The Vassall case provided several examples of the way in which some newspapers are prepared to throw allegations around on no more than a hunch when the hunt is up.

But I believe the defence of qualified privilege and the case that would have to be made out for it to be admissible has its own built-in safeguards. Moreover, newspapers—even the sensational ones—have learned a good deal from the Vassall and other affairs and the Press Council is constantly teaching them more. It is true as Lord Goodman said in the Lords debate that one needs to be careful when "one uses camouflage words like 'the Press'" and consider the reality behind the phrase:

> *newspapers owned by a very few private individuals who wholly control them and exercise absolute powers in respect of them.*

A COMMERCIALISED PRESS is in many ways a poor instrument for the public duties and responsibilities that history and the needs of man in modern society have placed upon it. But here again the balance of advantage and disadvantage has to be taken into account. Despite the existence of a few newspaper trusts in which the commercial element is reduced to a minimum, commercialisation is in most instances the only way there is to an unsubsidised, uncontrolled press able to stand on its own feet, free of external pressures. We have to do the best we can with what we have. Some of the values of a popular press may not be admirable but two Royal Commissions have shown it to be free of the worst sins its critics suspect. Journalism is a profession inside an industry. We need to strengthen this professional element, which is the element that serves the public interest, even though it often does so, perforce, with an eye on circulation. We can do so by increasing the ability of the profession honestly to serve the public interest without courting risks too great for its commercial paymasters willingly to endorse.

A defence of qualified privilege would be a step in that direction. The safeguards surrounding its use are sufficient to prevent it being exploited irresponsibly for purely commercial gain.

Francis-Williams

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LETTERS

Churchill & Hochhuth

I AM SOMEWHAT unhappy about the reasoning of your contributor, *R.* In his July "Column" he writes about the decision of the board of governors of the National Theatre to reject Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Soldiers*, which, according to him, "has revealed a curiously unsatisfactory relationship between the board and its artistic director, Sir Laurence Olivier."

Like *R*, my notion of the play is based on press information only, so I am not in a position to know about its aesthetic merits. But if there is a case for suspending judgment altogether, there is also a case for registering the weaknesses in the reasoning of your contributor.

He points out that, before Hochhuth, the murder of Sikorski had been attributed to Winston Churchill by both Dr. Goebbels and Stalin (also by the Polish and the Czech communists), and he concludes that "none of the evidence hitherto available makes a charge of [Churchill's] complicity either convincing or even credible." Yet, *R* asks,

> "is not the legend, so widely spread and so widely believed, of the murder of Sikorski sufficient to justify a dramatist in forming a hypothesis which may help him to display on the stage a view of contemporary history which may go beyond anything we can learn from established fact?.... A dramatist does not deal in the same kind of truth as an historian ... what he looks for in history is the raw material, whether of fact or of legend or even of mere unrealised potentialities, out of which he can fashion an action which on the stage will carry its own conviction."

This is a good anti-obscurantist liberal position, civilised and tolerant; but it misses the point. Once upon a time a legend was a legend, a myth was a myth, and all historical uncertainties were in fact legitimate subjects for playwrights' dramatic reinterpretations. But what was legitimate for Shakespeare is not legitimate for Hochhuth. Why? Because in our time he is not just dealing with different versions of what he and his viewers *may* regard as *possible* historical truth, or with a dramatic version of human truth, but with *a deliberate falsification of history*. I find it difficult to conceive of a Shakespeare taking his dramatic themes from, say, Stalin's *Short Course of the CPSU*, or a Pirandello basing his dramas on the subjects provided by Dr. Goebbels' *Reichsministerium* propaganda. Of course, historical truth and artistic truth are different things, but surely they both have some relation to truth, *tout court*. Soviet historiography and Nazi propaganda do not have any such relation. It is therefore wrong to argue, as *R* does, that Hochhuth simply does what every dramatist has a legitimate right to do: to give his own version of the human drama in history. It is possible to have new versions of the character of Xantippe, of the Trojan war, of Bluebeard, of Richard II, Henry IV, and any other theme or character shrouded in historical uncertainty. It is possible to use myths and even create legends in the theatre. But a legend is not the same thing as a falsification. How can there be any aesthetic satisfaction from a drama which *we know* to be based on a deliberate falsification by some propaganda ministry? It is not a question of *lèse*-Churchill, but of *lèse-verité*.

In an interview with the *Daily Express* (29 April), Hochhuth implied that he has done much historical research on the subject and consequently came to believe that Churchill had ordered Sikorski's murder:

> "I have been working on this play for three years. I have read letters between Stalin and Churchill, Roosevelt, Attlee and Truman. I have read the diary of Alanbrooke and British, Polish, American and Russian documents. The idea built up in my mind step by step as I read the events."

But more recently he said in *The Times* (15 July) that he believes in something which he calls "*Zeitgeschichte*, a type of historical drama in the tradition of Schiller which permits the dramatist to take liberties with historical facts." He repeatedly stressed his great admiration for Churchill and said that he did nothing to denigrate him. Even if this were the issue and not the taking of liberties with historical facts, what a strange ethical perspective it is in which it can be considered a mark of "greatness" for Churchill to have taken the decision to have Sikorski done away with! Similarly, Kenneth Tynan explained in his statement that this was a necessary step to remove an obstacle to an understanding with Moscow: "in the name of humanity it is often necessary to consent to action which some people might think inhuman" (*The Times*, 26 April). Ironically, the current position of the Soviet and Polish press, while supporting the thesis of "Churchill murdering Sikorski," goes directly counter to this particular argument. Commenting on the hullabaloo about *The Soldiers*, the Polish *Za i Przeciw* (11 June) and the Soviet *Novoe Vremya* (5 July) maintain now that Sikorski was "murdered by the British" because he wanted to pursue a *too friendly* policy towards the Soviet Union!

Surely a line must be drawn somewhere, otherwise we may still see the lies of Stalin and Hitler proliferating posthumously in the theatre. This would indeed be a curious inversion of values in life and literature. Why shouldn't there be, for instance, a play based on Stalin's version of the Moscow Trials? Perhaps Hochhuth's next play (based of course on the correspondence of Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt, and "decisive documents" deposited in a Swiss bank to be opened when we are all dead) could have as its subject Bukharin and Zinovyev plotting with Hitler. Or a play on Katyn with the murder of Polish officers attributed not to Stalin, but to the Western Allies? And why not a play attributing the germ warfare in Korea to a collusion between the Pope and General Dayan? Perhaps some of these dramatic subjects might even find the approval of Mr. Tynan.

I am surprised that *R* does not see the confusion he is creating through his indiscriminate approval

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of "anything goes" in the theatre. If the National Theatre's artistic director is not clear-headed enough about these matters, it is precisely the function of the board to intervene on such occasions. In doing so it is not, in my view, exercising censorship but preserving the minimum preconditions of civilised discourse, and therefore also of art. It is not confusing history and drama, as *R* argues, but is rightly assuming that artistic truth cannot be based on a known political falsification.

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

London

What's Wrong with British Medicine?

A Reply to Critics—By HENRY MILLER

I AGREE with Dr. Tonge that my treatment of general practice was cursory compared with that accorded to other aspects of medicine. For this there were two reasons. First, its problems are of daunting magnitude. Secondly, I know of no answers to them. Perhaps in one sense there are no answers.

It is easy to attribute the present uncertain and rather unhappy situation of general practice in Britain to either the financial difficulties or the tripartite structure of the National Health Service, or to lack of foresight on the parts of the Ministry of Health and the profession. But, in fact, no country in the world has solved the problem of making primary medical care of high quality generally available to its population. The headlong advance of medicine has faced us with needs and difficulties that could not have been predicted, and has revealed the resources available to us as both inadequate in amount and inflexible in application. As the pace of medical research accelerates, these problems will become more formidable and even less predictable: they are the problems of success. In such circumstances it is not easy to plan a tidy future for general practice without risking a further increase in the rigidity and centralisation of control that has been the Service's worst administrative fault. Although we must improve arrangements for the provision of primary medical care, its shape will in the last resort be determined by unforeseeable historical developments, both scientific and political, rather than by objective professional deliberations.

On the face of it, the traditional British concept of the family or personal doctor, with his continuing responsibility for the primary care of his patients and for the arrangement of their more specialised medical needs, seems almost ideal. Dr. Tonge is at one with the Minister of Health in accepting it without serious question as the basis of the future practice of medicine in Britain. To question the continuing practicability of this time-honoured pattern invites the shocked silence that would follow a similar question about our incredibly complicated and history-shackled system of Parliamentary Government. Both are the best that could conceivably be imagined; otherwise, of course, we would have altered them.

IN THE CASE OF general practice such a view could be sustained only by the most insular. The facts are that the system is expensive, that as it is organised at present it has never worked properly, that it is not a very effective way of securing the benefits of modern medicine for the patient, and that although there are many splendid general practitioners there are also many who are inadequately trained, ill-equipped, and dispirited. Some of their duties undoubtedly represent a misuse of professional time and skill. The pressure of work and the isolation of the general practitioner all too easily breed professional complacency. The reliance of the system on a great deal of unnecessary and professionally inefficient domiciliary visiting is uneconomic in its deployment of scarce and expensive medical manpower. At a time when all branches of the profession are under-manned, the critical shortage of recruits for this type of practice as it is carried out under present conditions (and particularly in the less salubrious industrial areas) should cause no surprise. Continuity of medical care has obvious advantages, but for most of us the need for a doctor is episodic and occasional; and it is more important that adequate medical records of our previous history should be available to the doctor who sees us now, than that he should be the same doctor who saw us in the past. Finally, it should be remembered that in Britain we are almost alone in our axiomatic acceptance of the inevitability of the personal doctor, and that it is possible to furnish an acceptable medical service without him. Although such a course may have the attractions of economy it is not without dangers and disadvantages, and the available evidence does not especially encourage us to follow the examples of the United States and some Scandinavian countries in this connection. Nevertheless, circumstances certainly force us to take a very critical look at the provision of primary medical care. I share with the late Lord Brain a strong suspicion that this is likely to become in most instances an adjunct of the hospital service, and that where geographical considerations preclude such an arrangement it would best be furnished by a medical team operating from premises designed and equipped for the purpose.

MY DIFFERENCES with Dr. Towers are more domestic and less likely to interest the general reader of ENCOUNTER. Dr. Towers although a Director of Medical Studies is not a practising doctor, but a Cambridge don and an anatomist. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that he springs to the defence of the traditional dichotomy between the pre-clinical and clinical stages of medical education. Indeed he has little choice, since his University has signally and, it seems, deliberately failed to follow

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the example of Oxford in sponsoring the vigorous and brilliant development of clinical as well as basic (*sic*) medical sciences. But to most medical educators the world over, this distinction is a thing of the past, and is sustained only where the pattern of medical education is determined by the existence of institutions so rooted in the past, and so hampered by antiquated physical facilities that they are unable as well as unwilling to adapt to the scientific revolution in medicine. I expect we will have the Cambridge medical school with us for many years to come, just as we will have the virtually autonomous medical schools of the London hospitals, indicted as anachronisms by Flexner fifty years ago—again, because we seem constitutionally incapable of accepting and acting on the facts that changing circumstances demand changing patterns of practice and education (to say nothing of new buildings).

I have no doubt that Dr. Towers' students do very well indeed. Many of the best entrants to medicine still make Oxbridge their first choice, and in any case one of the splendid features of any educational system is the capability of students to withstand its effects. However, it is a sobering thought that if we were to undertake the fallacious exercise of measuring the value of various systems of education in medicine by their output of distinguished medical academics, the palm would almost certainly go to the Scottish universities with their now unfashionable and widely denigrated tradition of didactic teaching.

I can reassure Dr. Comerford that I am familiar with the Peckham experiment as well as with

Past

THE RECOLLECTIONS *of childhood have no order; of all those every-coloured and shifting scented shoals that move below the surface of the moment of recollection, one, two, indiscriminately, suddenly, dart up out of their revolving waters into the present air; immortal flying fish.*

Occasionally, now, I dream that I am turning, after school, into the lane of confidences where I say to the children of my class, "At last I have a secret." "What is it? What is it?" "I can fly!" And when they do not believe me, I flap my arms like a large, stout bird and slowly leave the ground, only a few inches at first, then gaining air until I fly, like Dracula in a schoolboy cap, level with the windows of the school, peering in until the mistress at the piano screams, and the metronome falls with a clout to the ground, stops, and there is no more Time; and I fly over the trees and chimneys of my town, over the dockyards, skimming the masts and funnels; over Inkerman Street and Sebastopol Street and the street of the mancapped women hurrying over to the Jug and Bottle with a fish-frail full of empties; over the trees of the eternal Park where a brass band shakes the leaves and sends them showering down on to the nurses and the children, the cripples and the out-of-work. This is only a dream. The ugly, lovely, at least to me, town is alive, exciting and real though war has made a hideous hole in it. I do not need to remember a dream. The reality is there. The fine, live people, the spirit of Wales itself.

DYLAN THOMAS

ALL THE GROUPS *and individuals who believe in the surviving innocence of the original American character try to wish away the most disturbing facts of 20th-century American history by refusing to "recognise" them.*

Their view of civil liberties is that the pristine American can be preserved only by prohibiting heterodoxy. Their novel view of our ancient liberties is expressed in the aphorism of a former governor of California who declared, "Freedom of speech is such a precious privilege, we must be careful to whom we give it." They have demanded loyalty-oaths and have sought a dogma of Americanism for a country whose dogma has been anti-dogmatism.

We are tempted into negative and shifting definitions: to assume that we are simply what Europe is not. When Europe was aristocratic, we were simply anti-aristocratic; now that part of Europe is Communist, we are simply anti-Communist. But what are we, in and for ourselves?

If it is hard for us to live with the fact that the world is not simply a larger America, we should find some solace in the providential irony that defeats every idea once it becomes universal. If the world should ever become democratic, perhaps none of it could remain so. Who would then be the critics of democracy? Although this danger is not immediate, Americans seem to be preparing themselves against the prospect that what Jefferson called the "Empire for Liberty" should be bounded only by the earth. Our children, already equipped with supersonic space-ships, are getting ready to make Mars safe for democracy.

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

A MOMENT *of complete happiness never occurs in the creation of a work of art. The promise of it is felt in the act of creation but disappears towards the completion of the work. For it is then that the painter realises that it is only a picture he is painting. Until then he had almost dared to hope that the picture might spring to life. Were it not for this, the perfect painting might be painted, on the completion of which the painter could retire. It is this great insufficiency that drives him on. Thus the process of creation becomes necessary to the painter perhaps more than is the picture. The process, in fact, is habit-forming.*

LUCIAN FREUD

FAUST MAY TALK *a great deal about the moral dangers of content and sloth, but the truth is*

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Professor Butterfield's distinguished studies on the prevalence of chronic diseases in the community; and during the past two decades I have undertaken similar surveys of organic nervous disease. The scientific value of field work of this kind is incontrovertible, as also is the practical contribution to public health of specific screening procedures like mass radiography and cervical cytology, directed to the eradication and control of treatable diseases like tuberculosis and cervical cancer. Such activities are however a far cry from those promoted by such organisations as the Medical Centre of the Institute of Directors.

THE ANNUAL MEDICAL examination of executives that is a regular feature of business life in the United States is useful to the employer because it may reveal the advisability of selecting a potential successor for a man who is palpably ageing or showing a progressively rising blood pressure. Routine examination furnishes similar information of actuarial value to the Life Insurance Company. From the point of view of the individual examined, however, such examinations are mainly directed to the early recognition of virtually untreatable conditions such as early arterio-sclerotic heart disease, or benign hypertension without symptoms which is usually better untreated.

Such examinations rarely bring real benefit to the patient. They may be disastrous, as every physician knows who has seen a patient frightened out of his wits because his insurance policy has been declined or loaded on account of a rise of blood pressure that may have some actuarial significance but is of

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that his discontent is not a discontent with himself but a terror of being bored. What Faust is totally lacking in is a sacramental sense, a sense that the finite can be a sign for the infinite, that the secular can be sanctified.

In this lack Faust is a typical modern figure. In earlier ages men have been tempted to think that the finite was not a sign for the holy but the holy itself, and fell therefore into idolatry and magic. The form which the Devil assumed in such periods, therefore, was always finite; he appeared as the manifestation of some specific temptation, as a beautiful woman, a bag of gold, etc. In our age there are no idols in the strict sense because we tire of one and take up another so quickly that the word cannot apply. Our real, because permanent, idolatry is an idolatry of novelty. And in such an age the Devil appears in the form of Mephisto, in the form, that is, of an actor. The point about an actor is that he has no name of his own, for his name is Legion. One might say that our age recognised its nature on the day that Henry Irving received a knighthood. W. H. AUDEN

MILL'S DEFENCE *of liberty is in some respects naïve. He underrated men's capacity for being deceived. But it remains the finest statement of the liberal faith. I only wish that its principles commanded more allegiance. Some years ago at a Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin I read a paper in which I drew on Mill's arguments in favour of intellectual and political tolerance. It was not a good paper and it was very ill-received.* "In unsere Zeit," *I was told,* "hilft nicht John Stuart Mill." *I still think that this objection was profoundly mistaken. It is just in times like these that there is the greatest need for Mill's principles to be upheld.*

A. J. AYER

CENSORSHIP *of literature, which has existed in some form in all modern civilised countries, has two main purposes: one is to prevent people thinking about politics, and the other is to prevent them thinking about sex. On the whole, it has performed the first of these tasks more successfully than the second.*

In regard to most matters it is thought that knowledge about them conduces to sound judgment. There are, however, two exceptions: one is Communism and the other is sex. In America, though hardly as yet in this country, anybody who knows much about Communism is suspect, and it is thought that the handling of the Soviet Republic should be left wholly in the hands of those who know nothing about it. In England the same attitude prevails about sex.

However liberally obscenity may be defined, it will be found to condemn many of the greatest works of literature and art. Shakespeare, if he lived now, would have to emasculate his work very considerably. What modern publisher would tolerate some of the remarks of King Lear in Act IV, Scene 6? I dare not quote them, but the censor has not yet made it impossible for the reader to look them up. There are many passages in the Bible to which I dare not give even a reference. Many of the recognised great pictures and statues of the world are obscene within the meaning of the act, and if you were to send a photograph of them through the post, any philistine post official would have a right to destroy them. He would, in fact, have a right to destroy the originals, but fortunately they are not sent through the post.

For my part, if I had my way, I should abolish all legislation on the subject. Perhaps for the first year or two after such abolition there would be a flood of "feelthy" pictures, but if there was no ban on them, people would soon grow tired of them—except for a few with an exceptionally strong bent in this direction. At present a taste for pornography is almost universal among boys, but I think it is created by secrecy and tabu. If they were taught about sex in school, they would soon find it as dull as Caesar's Commentaries. BERTRAND RUSSELL

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no clinical importance. It is always easy for the physician to believe that his interference is necessarily beneficial, and sometimes even to convince himself that not to advise a radical change in a patient's way of life on the dubious evidence of the latest dietary or other prophylactic enthusiasm is near to professional negligence. However, if we are honest we must admit that we have no certain way of influencing the progression of many of the common degenerative diseases. The kind of doctor who tears the patient away from his lifelong and absorbing pursuit of organising the production of ball-bearings to blister for three frustrating weeks on the fly-ridden shores of the Mediterranean, in the cause of so-called relaxation, is as likely to provoke the coronary thrombosis to which his patient is at risk as to help him to escape it.

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

"The Stammerer as Hero"

IT IS A PITY that at a time when careful studies of stammering (or stuttering—the two words are synonymous) are at last beginning to appear Mr. Philip French [ENCOUNTER, November 1966] did not find time to consult some more authoritative texts than the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or some unknown "modern psychologists" who are friends of Michael Foot. Had he done so he might have avoided making such subjective judgments as "stammerers tend to be compulsive talkers" and "He is likely to develop as a defence mechanism a bitter wit, a sharp abrasive technique"—statements which say more about the way Mr. French functions rather than about characteristics common to all or even many stutterers.

In their recent publication, *The Syndrome of Stuttering*, Andrews and Harris from Newcastle reported a study of 80 stutterers and 80 controls in whom they studied 90 variables. In addition, using the information from the Newcastle 1,000 Family Study, they are able to make fairly definitive statements about the incidence. The incidence in Newcastle was at most 3%, although the prevalence seldom rose above 1%. This 3% of stutterers developed from a much larger pool of perhaps 5–10% who have a particular tendency to repeat sounds and syllables as they develop speech. Andrews and Harris are able to make a considerable contribution to the problem of the cause of stuttering, presenting evidence that there is a genetic background to the conditions.

> "Stuttering may be transmitted as a single dominant gene, the penetrance being modified by other genetic and environmental factors. Another possibility is that it is the product of multifactorial inheritance, frank stuttering occurring when genetic loading, or the unfavourable environmental settings in which it tends to become manifest, or both these factors, exceed a certain threshold."

As regards these other factors they were able to draw attention to three items based on a factor analysis of their variables. They were able to dispel certain long-held delusions about stutterers, *e.g.*, the belief that stutterers tend to be more intelligent than average. In fact the reverse is the case. I draw attention to this English text as it is the most recent authoritative work on the subject, but should Mr. French have time to study some American workers I could give him the references to the studies of Johnson and van Riper, to mention but two of the well-known names in this field.

Mr. French draws attention to the claims of therapists who advertise on underground stations, but qualified speech therapists in this country do not in fact advertise. It is surprising to learn of a clinic in this country where *cat-mat* type exercises have been practised recently. No therapists would claim to be able to help all stutterers but many can be cured. And again the Newcastle group have reported considerable success with syllabic speech, particularly where treatment started when the stutterer was still a child. Stutterers are not easy to treat and indeed those who have come to regard their stutter not as an irritating speech impediment but a subject for mythical speculation may well be beyond cure.

MARTIN C. O. BAX
Assistant Editor
Development of Medicine and Child Neurology

London

I AM GRATEFUL to Bryan Magee [ENCOUNTER, March] for his splendid description of Bevan on the platform and am reminded of the first time I heard Nye speak at the Oxford Labour Club when he used a similar technique on a highly confident American friend of mine. I'm also grateful to him for drawing my attention to the significance of the stammer in Elgar's "Enigma Variations." (My thanks are due too to David Sylvester for bringing to my notice Beethoven's stammering effects in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata and the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony.)

Mr. Magee is right in suggesting that I should have referred to *The Bartered Bride*. I suppose it is natural that I should prefer Schoenberg's Moses to Smetana's Vashek, but my failure to mention the latter was perhaps as much repression as forgetfulness. Vashek of course is hardly "the stammerer as hero"; indeed he is very much in the old tradition of the stupid, bumbling buffoon—dressing up as a bear, being dragged off home by mum and all. His relationship, however, with his parents and with his long-lost older brother (the "my brother is an only child" syndrome) would make him almost a casebook example for the psychologist. ("Now look, you've got to learn to stand on your own feet... go out and get your own girl, don't expect your parents to buy one for you.... Ever try *singing*?")

This naturally brings me on to Dr. Martin Bax who seems determined to put the stammerer back in the cage (or the file) where he belongs. I don't know whether this is Dr. Bax's customary style, but if it is then he's changed from the charming undergraduate I knew at Oxford ten years ago; maybe my "sharp abrasive technique" of those days got on the wrong side of his embryonic bedside manner.

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I have already dealt with several of his points in answering Miss Stengelhofen of the College of Speech Therapists [ENCOUNTER, February], and much of what he says imputes to me views that I've not expressed and which he has little reason to believe I hold. For example I never asserted that stammerers "tend to be more intelligent" than anyone else, and indeed was at pains to point out the discrepancy between "the stammerer as hero" (the title was somewhat ironic I need hardly say) in recent dramatic works and the actual experience of the stammerer. I cannot say that I'm as pleased as Dr. Bax seems to be that the "long-held delusions" that stammerers are of above-average intelligence have now been thoroughly exploded and that actually "the reverse is the case." Yet I can't really complain in view of the fact that up until now there would appear to have been a conspiracy to conceal the existence of this delusion from me. We're not all stupid though.

As my article was not concerned with therapy or medical research I did not read the Newcastle survey Dr. Bax mentions but I trust it is not written throughout in the uninviting style of the passage he quotes. Its existence, however, was made known to me by a doctor with whom I discussed my ideas before writing and another who read the article in manuscript. They both confirmed, as Dr. Bax does, that my paragraph on the statistics of stammering and the present state of professional opinion about the subject is not in serious conflict with the findings of Andrews and Harris.

I am pleased to note from Dr. Bax's concluding sentence that "stutterers are not easy to treat" as I've had a number of letters offering rapid cures—ranging from simple verbal courses to more elaborate (not to say Reichian) exercises. When he suggests however that "those who have come to regard their stutter not as an irritating speech impediment but a subject for mythical speculation may well be beyond cure" I can only say that a considerable number of people—psychologists, stammerers, non-stammerers—have informed me of the different kinds of stimulation that my reflections have given them. To be "beyond cure" is perhaps the price that I have had to pay for being in a position to gain these insights. I should certainly like to thank those people who have written to me for the kindness and sympathy of their tone, as well as for the additional information they have given me about stammering in life and in the arts. (I'm particularly glad to have come across an introduction that Maugham wrote for a special edition of *The Old Wives' Tale* in which he comments most revealingly on Bennett's stammer and by implication on his own. Garson Kanin quotes from it in his recent *Remembering Mr. Maugham.*)

When I set out to write what seemed to be a quite simple article I appreciated neither the size of the subject nor the extent of the interest in it. Quite apart from anything else it seems to have made it much easier for other people to speak to me—even if it hasn't made it that much easier for me to speak to them.

PHILIP FRENCH

Kentish Town,
London

Henry James & Edith Wharton

MR. DENIS DONOGHUE's attack upon my motives in writing *Edith Wharton and Henry James* [ENCOUNTER, November] is surely a critical, if not a personal impropriety. He says that I should have waited until certain materials at Yale were available to me but didn't because of "professional insistence." What he means by this woolly phrase is made clear in his declaration that this "insistence" is discernible in my "slowness to acknowledge intellectual debts." "She has done her homework," he says, "read everything that lay across her searching path, including the words of earlier scholars and critics. Her power of assimilation is notable. But a nod of thanks here or there would have been appropriate."

I must decline Mr. Donoghue's compliments along with his insults. My preface and notes *do* express thanks of various sorts. Since Mr. Donoghue says that my debts are not only all unacknowledged but legion, he would seem obliged to name those I have overlooked. But he offers in fact only one name, that of Blake Nevius. Since, even in this case, he does not specify the nature of my indebtedness, I can only reply that I remain quite unaware of this particular dependence (my own interpretation of Edith Wharton's writing, the subject of Nevius' study of some years ago, is rather different from his, as I pointed out in an article in *PMLA* in 1959). Moreover, my book, as Mr. Donoghue

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himself notes, is "mainly concerned with the friendship" of Edith Wharton and Henry James, that is, it is chiefly biographical, whereas Nevius concentrated on Mrs. Wharton's fiction, and so provided me with no real precedent, anyhow. Indeed, the *only* previous biographical reports of any significance were Mrs. Wharton's own autobiography and *A Portrait of Edith Wharton* by her friend Percy Lubbock. I found some suggestions in an essay by Edmund Wilson and more recently Wayne Andrews quoted some portions of her unpublished diary in the introduction to a collection of her stories. All of these, of course, I do mention, along with other acknowledgments, in my book. But I should like to point out that the main support of my study was, in any case, *not* previous scholarship and criticism, but the new *primary* material—unpublished letters which I had the privilege of bringing into view for the first time. It is to the writers of these, above all to Henry James himself, whose wonderful wit so lights up my subject, that my greatest debts are due, and enthusiastically declared. I do not think I should comment any further on Mr. Donoghue's suggestion that my book was hustled into print out of my hostility to other scholars and a desire to beat them out.

I would have written a better book if I had waited, says Mr. Donoghue. Perhaps, but I have not felt so. I did not undertake to write a cradle-to-grave "Life" but a much smaller thing, the story of Mrs. Wharton's friendship with one man, Henry James, during a period of scarcely a dozen years, with as much emphasis on James as on her. *This* subject seemed already to have firm outline and connection as displayed in the materials I had in hand, and I did not think any further addition would significantly alter my interpretation. The James letters to Mrs. Wharton, for example, were a pretty complete series, as were his letters to important mutual friends. Having what Mr. Donoghue acknowledges to be "a good story already" before me, why should it be held back from common enjoyment? This present pleasure need not prevent us from a further enjoyment of the complete story of Edith Wharton's life when that appears.

Since I didn't wait, though, says Mr. Donoghue, my book is full of gaps of fact filled in by fancy. Yet I have imagined no scenes not reported, nor created conversations not set down, nor adumbrated character beyond a historian's moderate privilege. No history is a seamless garment, of course, and "perhaps" is a legitimate word if used with discretion. But in this book *fact*-finding was my chief aim, and, I believe, here I had some successes Mr. Donoghue could have mentioned. Over the qualities of my occasional "perhapses" it is difficult to argue without detailed reference to the argument behind each; Mr. Donoghue makes no reference of this sort for his part. That Paul Bourget's villa, which often welcomed both the Whartons and James may have provided a meeting place for all seems at least a possibility worth mentioning. As does the pertinence, "possibly," of an early story of marital incompatibility to Edith Wharton's own emotional crises, and that this same incompatibility could have helped to worsen her husband's instability at a later date. But my reference to the reflections of those who listened to James talking about his youth one time at the Wharton house, which Mr. Donoghue complains about, is not suppositional, but drawn from Edith Wharton's own published account in her autobiography.

Yes, I once remarked that Walter Berry "may," sooner or later, have been Mrs. Wharton's lover, but it is a point I would not wish to labour, since such things can't often be proved as Mr. Donoghue wants proof, outside the divorce courts. She, at any rate, in a passage from her diary, speaks of a moment in their intimacy when "the lover became the husband." She recorded that Berry "spoiled" that magical moment, perhaps, if we take her literally, because Berry declined the husbandly role. Ignoring her own words altogether, though, Mr. Donoghue finds this a preposterous suggestion. I am, as a matter of fact, inclined to find it equally possible that Berry rejected her passionate offering in any form, which Mr. Donoghue prefers to be more certain about, and it seems unfair on his part to neglect to mention that I give this second possibility equal innings with the first, and leave the matter properly undecided.

But this and other offences against justice and good manners in Mr. Donoghue's review seem to illustrate the fatal effects of the "intentional fallacy" he has committed against my book.

MILLICENT BELL

Palermo, Sicily

MRS. BELL denies that she is indebted to Blake Nevius' *Edith Wharton*. Interested readers may wish to compare her page 278 (on Undine Spragg —of *The Custom of the Country*—and the picaresque tradition) with Mr. Nevius' pages 157–9. Or Mrs. Bell's page 239 (on the post-Darwinian naturalism of *The House of Mirth*, disclosed in the presentation of Lily Bart) with Mr. Nevius' pages 56–8. Or Mrs. Bell's page 256 (on the technical errors about textile manufacture in *The Fruit of the Tree*) with Mr. Nevius' pages 99 and 255. Or Mrs. Bell's page 292 (the relation between "Bunner Sisters" and "Mrs. Manstey's View") with Mr. Nevius' page 26.

On more speculative matters I am pleased to see that Mrs. Bell has moved away from the offensive hypothesis about Mrs. Wharton's adultery with Walter Berry. Pleased, too, that she is now moving closer to my own interpretation that Berry told his dear friend, with the degree of Jamesian delicacy and care which one would expect from him, that he was not in love with her. This "second possibility" does not, incidentally, appear in Mrs. Bell's book. I quote the relevant passage to show that it does not coincide with my interpretation:

> "Did she voice any part of these longings? Her diary does not say, but somehow, it seems, Berry responded with word or gesture that shattered her dream. Perhaps his attitude suggested that mistress rather than wife was his conception of her future with him. Or perhaps, bored, he had simply got up and left her with no offering at all, no intenser agreement than that of literary talk."

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But that is not it at all, that is not what I meant, at all. I hope Mrs. Bell can see the difference, but I am not sure. Indeed, what is disabling in her book is a pervasive vulgarity of interpretation; as if her mind, engaged with delicate matter, were an instrument too blunt for such encounters. In my review I tried to avoid saying this.

DENIS DONOGHUE

University College,
Dublin

Misprint Demon

ONE BONE TO PICK with the normally immaculate editing of ENCOUNTER. The concluding part of Hugh Trevor-Roper's article on "Witches and Witchcraft" [June] has a photograph of that well-known monarch James VI and I, author among other things of a treatise on demonology. He is labelled King James II of Scotland.

LESLEY MUNN

Glasgow Herald

[ED. NOTE:—This was not, of course, Professor Trevor-Roper's error, but the fault of what, appropriately enough, the Germans call the *Druckfehlerteufel,* the demon of misprints.]

Iniquity?

"WE LIVE in an altogether more decent, kindly, and concerned society than that seemly past invented by Miss Hansford Johnson." Your issue [ENCOUNTER, July] containing these words of Kenneth Allsop's printed a poem describing a University lecturer's seduction of his innocent girl student. Until very recently the act celebrated in the poem would have led to the dismissal of its perpetrator from his post. Does Mr. Allsop regard "the defilement of skivvies and slum minors" as more heinous than that of girls entrusted to one's tutorial care?

JOHN C. BRYCE

University of Glasgow

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PROFESSOR BRYCE'S question seems to have bewilderingly little bearing on what I was discussing. But if he really does want a reaction to his peculiar corollary my answer is Yes, I do think the coercion by rich lechers of underfed children into prostituted servitude more heinous than sex between a lecturer and an undergraduate.

KENNETH ALLSOP

Ware, Herts

IN HIS ESSAY "Iniquity?" [ENCOUNTER, July] Kenneth Allsop writes: "Dr. Alex Comfort once remarked about murder literature: 'Musing about murder is apparently "healthy"; musing about sexual enjoyment is not.'"

It is possible that Dr. Comfort has written something to this effect, as has Gershom Legman; but the actual sentence occurs in my essay "The Uses of Pornography" on page 37 of the symposium *Does Pornography Matter?* published in 1961. This essay was reprinted in my collected essays *The Danger of Equality* (1966) and the sentence can be found on page 227.

GEOFFREY GORER

Haywards Heath,
Sussex

Coincidence ?

PROFESSOR Hugh Trevor-Roper notes in his essay [ENCOUNTER, May-June] on "Witches and Witchcraft" that the English translation of *de Betoverde Weereld* by Bekker appeared under the title *The World turn'd upside down,* in 1700.

Eighty-one years later as the forces of Cornwallis surrendered to the Continental Army and its French allies, the military bands played an air which all recognised as *The World Turned Upside Down* (according to Morison's *The Oxford History of the American People*).

Was the title of the song inspired by that of the book? Was the book's title in translation influenced by the song? Or was it just a coincidence?

ARTHUR J. MORGAN

New Rochelle, N.Y.

Evtushenko

WITH RESPECT to the note, by Henry Gifford, to the article "On Evtushenko" [ENCOUNTER, April], I would like to correct the statement, there given, that "Bratsk Station" has not been published in English. It has: *Yevgeny Yevtushenko, New Works: The Bratsk Station,* published by Sun Books Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, Australia. The translation is by Tina Tupikina-Glaessner and Geoffrey Dutton.

A. R. F. DOWLING

London

Erratum

In the advertisement for *Herder Correspondence,* which appeared on page 2 of our August issue, the address for replies was incorrectly given as 15 Wellesley Mansions, London N.14. The correct London postal district number is W.14.

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AUTHORS

Edna O'Brien, Irish novelist (b. 1932 in County Clare), is the author of (among other books) *Lonely Girl* (1962), *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964), and *Casualties of Peace* (1966), all published by Cape. . . .

Robert Ardrey, whose two most recent books (*African Genesis* and *The Territorial Imperative*) were studies in anthropology, is also a novelist (*The Brotherhood of Fear*, 1952) and playwright (*Thunder Rock*, 1940, *Shadow of Heroes*, 1958). He is an American living in Rome. . . .

John Osborne (b. 1929), is best-known for his plays: *Look Back in Anger* (1957), *The Entertainer* (1957), *Luther* (1961) *Inadmissible Evidence* (1965). . . .

Constantine FitzGibbon's most recent works are his biography of *Dylan Thomas* (1965) and an edition of the poet's letters (1966). His novels include *When the Kissing Had to Stop* (1962). His autobiography *Through the Minefield* was recently published by the Bodley Head. . . .

Max Beloff is Gladstone Professor of Government and Administration at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of All Souls. He is the author of scholarly studies in the field of history and political science, including *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia* (1947–49), *Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy* (1948), *Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process* (1955). . . .

Hans J. Morgenthau is Director of the Centre for the Study of American Foreign and Military Policy at the University of Chicago. His books include *Politics in the 20th Century* (1962) and *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* (1965). He has been over the recent years a leading speaker at the various Viet Nam "Teach-Ins" in the United States. . . .

Nirad Chaudhuri *writes:* "My article, which was written before the last general elections in India, needs to be supplemented by an explanation about the failure of the Congress Party to obtain majorities and form governments in certain provinces. These defeats were due to an exasperated gesture of the people against the inefficiency and corruption of the ruling party, and not to positive preference for the other parties. The non-Congress governments remain unstable, and there is already some feeling that the anti-Congress gesture was not wise. . . ."

David Daiches (b. 1912), is Professor of English and Dean of the School of English Studies at the University of Sussex. His books include *The Novel and the Modern World* (1939, new ed. 1960), *Robert Burns* (1950, new ed. 1966) and *A Critical History of English Literature* (1960). . . .

Colin Wilson, born in Leicester (1931), is the author of *The Outsider* (1956), *Religion and the Rebel* (1957), and *Introduction to the New Existentialism* (1966). His novels include *Ritual in the Dark* (1960) and *The Glass Cage* (1966). . . .

Sir Herbert Read (b. 1893), is the distinguished art and literary critic. Among his best-known works are *Art and Society* (1936), *Education Through Art* (1943), *A Concise History of Modern Painting* (1959), and *The Origins of Form in Art* (1965). . . .

John Mander is the author of *The Eagle and the Bear* (1959), *The Writer and Commitment* (1961), *Berlin: Hostage for the West* (1962), and *Great Britain or Little England?* (1963). . . .

James Cameron, much-travelled foreign correspondent, has recently published his autobiography, *Point of Departure* (Barker). His other books include *Witness, The African Revolution,* and *1914*. In the past year he has covered both the Viet Nam and the Arab-Israeli wars. . . .

Kingsley Amis, since his first novel, *Lucky Jim* (1954), has published six novels, the latest of which is *The Anti-Death League* (Gollancz). . . .

Dannie Abse was born in Cardiff in 1923. Among his books of poems are *Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve* (1954), *Tenants of the House* (1957), and *Poems, Golders Green* (1962). His *Three Questor Plays* was published in July this year. . . .

Tibor Szamuely *writes:* "Born in Moscow—war service in the Red Army—graduated from Moscow University and various Soviet prisons and prison camps—Professor of Modern History and (for one year) Vice-Rector of Budapest University—Senior Lecturer at Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Winneba, Ghana. At present Lecturer in Politics at the University of Reading, regular contributor to the *Spectator*, and author of a book, *The Russian Tradition*, to be published by Secker & Warburg. . . ."

Stanley Henig, b. 1939, has been M.P. (Labour) for Lancaster since 1966. He took his degree at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and was Lecturer in Politics at Lancaster University from 1964–66. . . .

Colin Welch is Deputy Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* in London. Many ENCOUNTER readers will remember his famous critique of Enid Blyton's Noddy in January 1958. . . .

James Stern is the author of three volumes of short stories. *Something Wrong*, the second of these collections, won the first Arts Council short story Award in 1966. A fourth volume, *The Stories of James Stern*, is to be published by Secker & Warburg early in 1968. . . .

Malcolm Lowry's novel *Under the Volcano* has been re-issued by Cape (and by Penguin), and there is a recent volume (Cape, London and Lippincott, New York) of Lowry's *Letters*, edited by Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonrer Lowry. . . .

The quotation from **W. H. Auden** (p. 3) is taken from his contribution to *Authors Take Sides on Viet Nam*, shortly to be published by Peter Owen. . .

Cover design by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles.**

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